The journey of Balsa, the female bodyguard

闇の守り人

原作◎上橋菜穂子
漫画◎結布

Nemuki+ Comics

Moribito II: Guardian of the darkness
Volume Two

朝日新聞出版
Published by Asahi Shimbun Publications Inc.

Yami no Moribito

"Guardian of the Darkness"

By Uehashi Nahoko

Illustrated by Yuu

Scanlation:
Lovely Strange Dark
LSD.mangadex.com

Chapter Six

Raws: Kalendel
Translation: Den
Editing: Samara &
Nutritious Milk
QC: Ianu

The journey of Balsa, the female bodyguard

闇の守り人

Moribito II: Guardian of the Darkness

Volume Two

Story by Nahoko Uehashi

Comic Artist by Yu

原作◎上橋菜穂子

漫画◎結布

Nemuki+ Comics

朝日新聞出版

Nemuki+
コミックス

闇の守り人 2

Moribito II: Guardian of the Darkness

原作◎上橋菜穂子

漫画◎結布

朝日新聞出版

Published by Asahi Shimbun Publications Inc.

9784022141941

1920979006300

ISBN978-4-02-214194-1

C0979 ¥630E

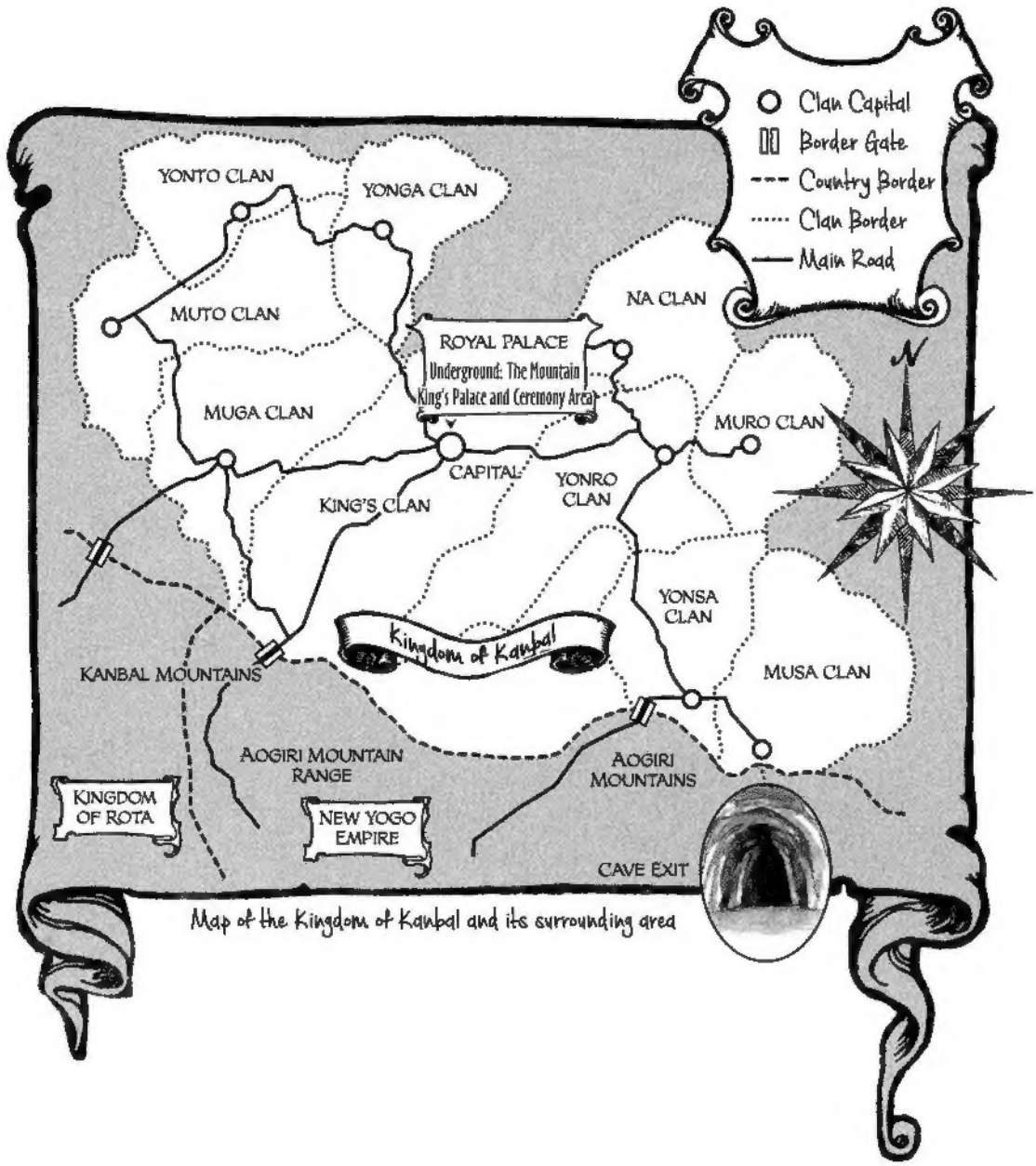
定価：本体630円＋税

朝日新聞出版

Yami no Moribito 2

Author Uehashi Nahoko

Illustrator Yuu



Map of the Kingdom of Kanbal and its surrounding area

YAMI NO MORIBITO
CHAPTER 6

SSST
WHEN I THINK BACK ON IT,
KANBAL HAS CHANGED A LOT THESE PAST TWENTY YEARS.
THE KING'S POWER HAS GOTTEN STRONGER EVER SINCE KING ROGSAM'S REIGN.
NOWADAYS, ALL YOUNG MEN DESCENDED FROM THE CHIEF'S BLOODLINE
GO AND LIVE IN THE CAPITAL AFTER THEY TURN EIGHTEEN.
THEY'VE FORMED WHAT THEY CALL THE "KING'S CIRCLE", WITH YUGURO MUSA AND OUR CURRENT KING RADALLE AT ITS CENTER.

WOULDN'T IT BRING MORE STABILITY TO THE KINGDOM IF EVERY-ONE LIVES AS ONE, INSTEAD OF BEING SEPARATED BY CLANS?
ONLY IF EVERYONE IS COMMITTED TO TREATING EVERYONE EQUALLY.
.....
I FIND IT A BIT SUSPICIOUS.
BUT AS IT IS NOW, KING RADALLE AND YUGURO'S INFLUENCE SEEM TO BE GROWING EXPONENTIALLY.

ALL THE MEN BEFORE HIM WHO WENT AFTER JIGURO ATTACKED HIM WITHOUT SPEAKING A WORD, NO MATTER HOW MUCH HE PLEADED.
YUGURO... THAT MAN FROM BACK THEN.
THEIR "VOW OF DEAFNESS AND SILENCE" WAS LIKE A PRAYER,
LIKE THEY WOULD RECEIVE STRENGTH FROM GOD BY FULFILLING THAT VOW WHEN THEY MET THEIR OPPONENT.
HE SUDDENLY SHOWED UP AT THE HOUSE WHERE WE WERE HIDING...
BUT YUGURO WAS DIFFERENT.

YUGURO...
JIGURO...
KSH
.....?!
CLENCH
YES, YOU CAN RELAX.
I'M JIGURO'S BROTHER.
AND THAT'S...
HE CHEERFULLY TOLD US ABOUT THE GOINGS-ON IN THE CAPITAL AND ABOUT ROGSAM'S ILLNESS.
HOW KANBAL IS NOW.

THEN HE STAYED WITH US IN OUR HUT. EVERY NIGHT HE AND JIGURO WOULD GO SOMEWHERE AND ONLY RETURN AT DAWN.
I WANTED TO KNOW WHAT WAS HAPPENING, SO ONE NIGHT I FOLLOWED THEM.
whoosh
THE TIPS OF THEIR SPEARS WERE SHINING EVEN IN THE FAINT LIGHT OF THE CRESCENT MOON.
WHOA...
RUSTLE...

CLANG
EVERY MOVE LOOKED SO BEAUTIFUL.
WHOOSH
IT LOOKED LIKE THEY WERE DANCING.

YUGURO LEFT A MONTH LATER.
...HE SAID A WOLF ATTACKED OUR OLDER BROTHER AND HE LOST HIS ARM.
AT LEAST ONE BURDEN HAS BEEN TAKEN OFF MY SHOULDERS.
I WAS ABLE TO PASS ON THE MUSA CLAN'S SECRET FIGHTING TECHNIQUES TO YUGURO JUST WHEN THEY WERE ABOUT TO DIE OUT.

I ASSUMED JIGURO GAVE YUGURO THE GOLD RING FROM HIS SPEAR AS PROOF THAT HE HAD PASSED ON THE TECHNIQUES TO HIM.
BUT NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, THAT RING PROBABLY HAD SOME GREATER SIGNIFICANCE.
DID YUGURO BETRAY HIM BACK THEN?
HE TOLD THE KING HE DEFEATED JIGURO WHEN HE NEVER DID,
AND BROUGHT HOME THE GOLD RING THAT JIGURO NEVER STOLE. HE WAS HAILED...
...A HERO.

IF YUGURO HAD THE OTHER EIGHT GOLD RINGS,
THEN HE'S THE ONE WHO MUST HAVE STOLEN THEM.
THAT CAN'T BE.
HE COULDN'T HAVE STOLEN THEM.
YUGURO WAS ONLY 16 WHEN IT WAS SAID THAT JIGURO STOLE THE RINGS.
BACK THEN HE STILL LIVED WITHIN THE MUSA CLAN'S TERRITORY. HE WASN'T IN THE PALACE.

BUT HE WAS TOO YOUNG AND HAD NO CHANCE OF DEFEATING JIGURO, SO HE WAS LEFT OUT OF IT.
WHEN JIGURO RAN AWAY, THE FIRST PERSON WHO WAS SUPPOSED TO GO AFTER HIM WAS KAGURO, BUT HE INJURED HIS ARM AND SO HE COULDN'T.
THE NEXT LOGICAL CANDIDATE WAS YUGURO,
CLENCH

IN THE END, IT WAS TAGURU WHO WAS CHOSEN FROM THE CLAN TO PURSUE HIM.

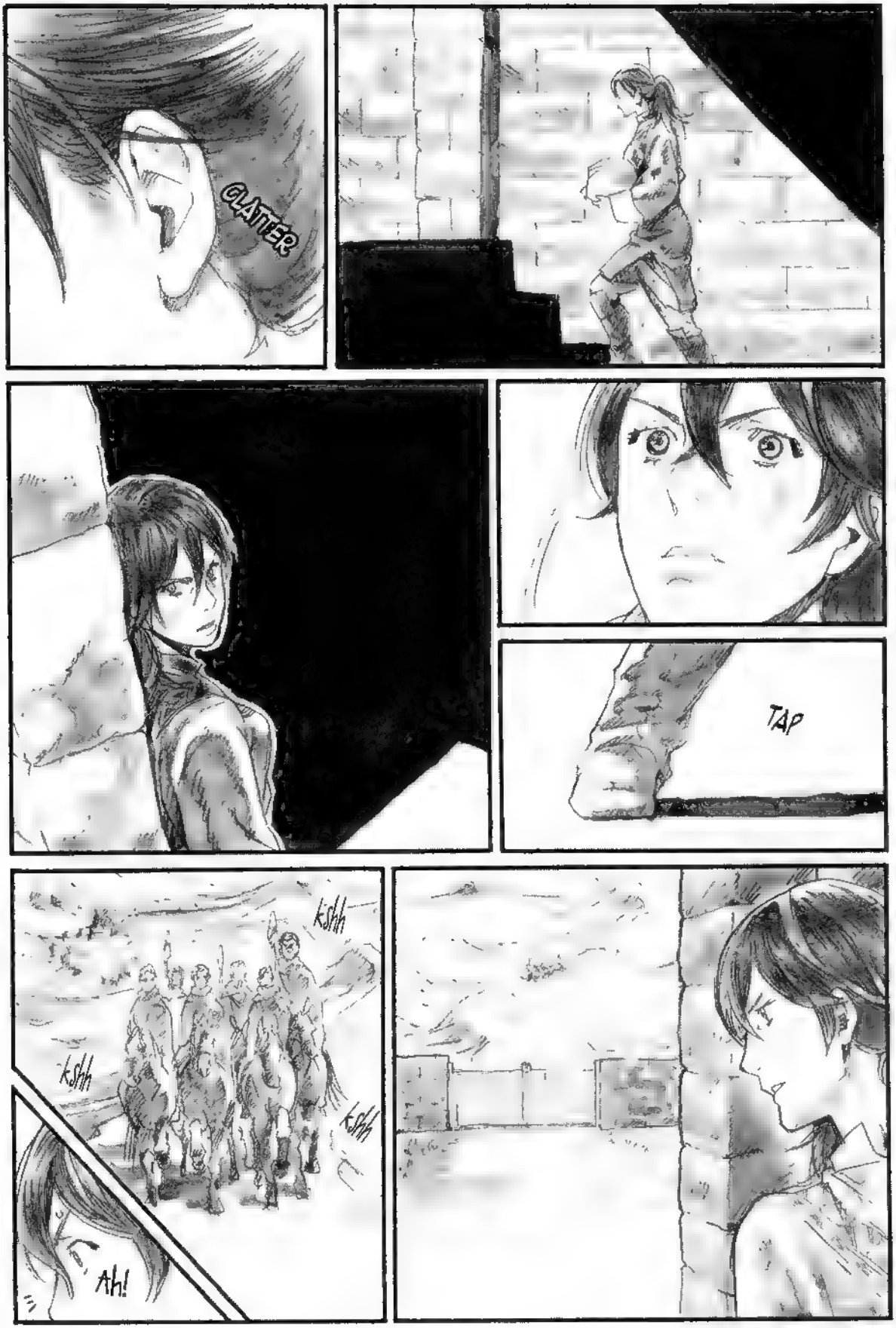
CLENCH
THEN NO MATTER HOW YOU LOOK AT IT, THERE WAS ONLY ONE PERSON WHO COULD HAVE GIVEN YUGURO THE OTHER GOLD RINGS.
YES...
KING ROGSAM.
YES...
AND HE FOUND AN ALLY IN YUGURO BY MAKING HIM A HERO.
THAT WAS A CLEVER WAY TO BURY JIGURO. HE WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO KNEW ABOUT THE PLOT TO KILL THE PREVIOUS KING.

IT'S GETTING LATE.
WHY DON'T WE GO TO BED?
...WELL, ALL WE CAN DO IS SPECULATE.
YOU CAN JUST SAY I'M THE DAUGHTER OF AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE AND THAT I'M BEING TREATED HERE.
OH,
PLEASE DON'T TELL ANYONE I'M YOUR NIECE.
clatter
I DON'T WANT TO CAUSE YOU ANY TROUBLE.
WHY WOULD YOU ASK THAT?
clink

I JUST TEND TO WORRY.
I ALWAYS ASSUME THAT THE WORST WILL HAPPEN...
CHIRP
CHIRP
I UNDER-STAND.
BUT, YUKA,
BALSA IS GOING THROUGH SOME THINGS, SO PLEASE DON'T TELL ANYONE ABOUT HER.
I FIND IT STRANGE THAT YOU HAVEN'T NOTICED,
BUT YOU LOOK SO MUCH ALIKE.
IT'S PROBABLY BEST NOT TO GO OUT IN PUBLIC TOGETHER.

.....
CLATTER
SO THERE'S SOMEONE WHO LOOKS LIKE ME...

THE TIME I SPENT WITH HER
WAS LIKE A HAPPY DREAM.


CLATTER
TAP
KSHH
KSHH
KSHH
Ah!

THAT MAN...
HE'S THE MERCHANT I BOUGHT CLOTHES FROM IN SULA LASSAL...
neiiaah
CLOP
BALSA!
Oh!
THE GUARDS ARE HERE!
RUN THROUGH THE BACK DOOR!
IT'S USELESS TO RUN AT THIS POINT.

IF I RUN FROM HERE, THEY'LL FIND OUT QUICKLY.
AND IF I DO, IT WOULD LOOK LIKE I COMMITTED SOME CRIME, WOULDN'T IT?
THE FACT THAT THEY CAME HERE TO CATCH ME MEANS THAT YUGURO KNOWS WHO I AM.

AND THAT I COULD GET IN HIS WAY.
AUNT YUKA...
I WANT TO KNOW WHAT HE'S PLANNING.
I WANT TO KNOW WHAT'S BEHIND WHAT HAPPENED.
SO RIGHT NOW I'LL JUST GO ALONG WITH WHATEVER HAPPENS.

...BALSA.
kshh
kshh
kshh
THAT'S WHAT YOU DO WHEN YOU CAN'T BREAK THROUGH BY YOUR OWN STRENGTH.
I'VE ENJOYED THESE LAST FOUR DAYS.
FROM HERE ON, LET'S GO BACK TO BEING STRANGERS.
THANK YOU.

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?!
DON'T TREAT ME LIKE A FOOL!
IF YOU THINK I'M GOING TO ABANDON MY ONLY NIECE...
AUNT YUKA,
IF I'M ALONE, I'LL BE ABLE TO ACT FREELY.
PLEASE PRETEND YOU DON'T KNOW ME.
DON'T MAKE ME WORRY ABOUT YOU, TOO.
...PLEASE UNDERSTAND.
...UH.

turn
tap
hug
Hm...
WHAT'S ALL THIS COMMOTION ABOUT?
CAPTAIN SUSA.
creak

I'M SORRY FOR BOTHERING YOU.
YUKA,
THIS IS DOM, CAPTAIN OF THE MUSA CLAN GUARDS.
AND THIS IS KAHM, THE ELDEST SON OF MUSA'S CHIEF, KAGURO.
THEY'RE LOOKING FOR A CRIMINAL WHO HAS FLED TO YONSA.
WE HEARD THAT SHE'S HIDING IN THIS CLINIC.

SHE ILLEGALLY ENTERED THE CAVES IN MUSA TERRITORY TO STEAL A LYOKU-HAKU STONE.
WHAT CRIME DID SHE COMMIT?
A CRIMI-NAL?
PLEASE LET US IN.
ANYWAY, THAT WOMAN IS DECEIVING YOU.
THERE'S NO ONE LIKE THAT IN THIS CLINIC.
THAT'S RIDICU-LOUS.
FOR THE HONOR OF THE YONSA CLAN.
IT'S OUR DUTY TO COOPERATE WITH THE MUSA CLAN
YUKA, PLEASE.

ENTER AS YOU WISH.
BUT PLEASE DO SO QUIETLY. I HAVE PATIENTS WHO ARE VERY SICK.
...I UNDERSTAND.
nod
clack
clatter
bam

creak
SHE HAS RECURRING HEADACHES AND SHE COULDN'T FIGURE OUT WHY, SO HER MOTHER TOLD HER TO COME HERE.
THE DAUGHTER OF AN OLD FRIEND IS SLEEPING IN THERE.
WHAT'S IN HERE?
rustle
clack
...WHAT IS IT?

I'M SURE OF IT!
TH... THAT'S HER!
HSHS

TAKING A LYOKUHAKU IS A SERI-OUS CRIME!
SURRENDER PEACEFULLY!
YOU!!
WE KNOW THAT YOU ILLEGALLY ENTERED THE CAVES IN MUSA TO STEAL PRECIOUS STONES!
YES, I DO KNOW THIS MAN.
YOU'RE THE MERCHANT FROM SULA LASSAL WHO SELLS CLOTHES, RIGHT?
BUT HOW DOES THAT MAKE ME A CRIMINAL?
.....?
WHAT?
I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE SAYING...

.....
...SO THOSE KIDS BLABBED THAT QUICKLY, HUH.
YOU'RE GOOD AT PLAYING DUMB, I'LL GIVE YOU THAT.
TWO CHILDREN TESTIFIED THAT THEY SAW YOU DEEP INSIDE THE CAVE.
BUT I DIDN'T GO THERE TO STEAL JEWELS.
YES, IT'S TRUE, I WENT IN THE CAVE.
I HAD MY OWN REASONS WHY I NEEDED TO GO FROM NEW YOGO TO THE MUSA CLAN'S TERRITORY, SO I PASSED THROUGH THE CAVES. THAT WAS IT.

RUSTLE
SO THE PERSON WHO SENT YOU AFTER ME WANTED YOU TO TREAT ME THIS WAY
BEFORE SPEAKING A WORD TO ME.
flinch
YOU WOULDN'T WANT ME TO EXPLAIN IN FRONT OF A MEMBER OF THE YONSA CLAN, WOULD YOU?
.....WELL, THEN. LET ME SPEAK TO THE CHIEF OF THE MUSA CLAN AND TELL HIM WHY I CAME HERE.

BUT PREPARE YOUR-SELF.
MY FATHER IS A STRICT MAN.
HE WON'T FALL FOR YOUR EXCUSES.
IF YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY, THEN LET YOURSELF BE JUDGED IN FRONT OF THE CHIEF.
...NOW COME WITH US PEACEFULLY.
YUKA, I'M SORRY FOR CAUSING ALL THIS TROUBLE.
THESE PEOPLE HAVE IT WRONG.
I'LL COME BACK AND PAY FOR MY TREATMENT HERE AFTER I PROVE MY INNOCENCE.

bang

Yami no Moribito

"Guardian of the Darkness"

By Uehashi Nahoko

Illustrated by Yuu

Scanlation:
Lovely Strange Dark
LSD.mangadex.com

Chapter Seven

Raws: Kalendel
Translation: Den
Editing: Samara &
Nutritious Milk
QC: Ianu

YAMI NO MORIBITO
CHAPTER 7

THE CLAN'S BORDER.

NO, I JUST DID WHAT ANYONE WOULD DO.
...WELL THEN, TAKE CARE OF YOUR-SELVES.
HYAH!
YOU'VE BEEN SUCH GREAT HELP. WE WON'T FORGET WHAT YOU DID FOR US.
SUSA.
WE'LL BE GOING BACK THROUGH THE MOUN-TAIN ROAD.
IF YOU FOLLOW THE VALLEY ROAD FROM HERE, YOU'LL BE ABLE TO GET BACK TO SULA LASSAL.
WITH YOUR HELP, WE WERE ABLE TO SAFELY CATCH THE CRIMINAL.
GOOD WORK.
I'M SURE
SHE WON'T.
.....
YOU'RE SURE SHE WON'T COME AFTER ME FOR REVENGE?

WELL THEN,
LET'S GO.
SLIDE
WHACK

Ha ha ha
GUESS YOU GOT USED TO BEING HIT FROM JIGURO.
OOH, YOU TOOK THAT PRETTY WELL.
he he he
FLINCH
BUMP

glance
HAHA!
BUMP
WHAT'S WRONG? CAN'T KEEP YOUR HORSE GOING STRAIGHT?
THUD
huff
huff
huff
DAMN.
fssh
KAHM, WHY DON'T WE REST HERE FOR A WHILE?

THE CRIMINAL NEEDS REST TOO.
THE ROPE'S LOOSE.
fsshfsshfssh
GLUG

THE TOWN'S ONLY 30 LON AWAY.
WHY WOULD YOU NEED WATER?
IT'S FOR HER.
30 lon = around 1 hour
WHAP
splash
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
KAHM, THAT'S NOT A WOMAN.
SHE'S A BUG THAT'S STANDING IN THE WAY OF OUR DREAMS.
SHE'S NOT A BUG!!
I KNOW WE HAVE TO KILL HER, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN WE HAVE TO TREAT HER THIS POORLY!!

...HERE WE GO, THEN.
stand
RUSTLE
WH- WHA...
WHEN DID YOU...?!
HEY. YOU REALLY MADE THIS MORE COMPLICATED THAN IT SHOULD BE.

...SAME THING.
I'LL JUST SAY YOU ATTACKED FIRST.
YOU WANT ME TO FIGHT YOU SO YOU'LL HAVE A GOOD REASON TO KILL ME, RIGHT?
WHAT IF I DON'T FIGHT OR RUN? WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO THEN?
.....
NO ONE ELSE IS HERE TO SAY OTHER-WISE.
WELL,
YUGURO KNOWS YOU WELL
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, MY FEEL-INGS?
I WANTED TO GET THIS OVER WITH SOONER, BUT I HAD TO BE CONSIDERATE OF THE FEELINGS OF THE CHIEF'S SON OVER HERE.

I'M NOT WORRIED ABOUT GETTING MY HANDS DIRTY!
KAHM, NO DISRESPECT,
BUT IF YOU HAVE AN IMPORTANT JOB TO DO, YOU SHOULDN'T BE WORRIED ABOUT GETTING YOUR HANDS DIRTY.
WE HAVE TO GIVE HER AN HONORABLE DEATH...
LET HER DIE IN A FAIR FIGHT!
WHAT I'M SAYING IS IF WE'RE GOING TO KILL HER, WE SHOULD LET HER HAVE HER SPEAR!

KAHM,
YOU SEEM TO BE A BETTER MAN THAN THAT BEAST OVER THERE,
BUT YOU'RE MAKING A BIG MISTAKE.
HONOR DOESN'T MEAN ANYTHING TO THE PERSON KILLED, NO MATTER IF IT WAS A FAIR FIGHT OR NOT.
IT'S JUST AN EXCUSE TO JUSTIFY KILLING THEM.
...YOUR UNCLE JIGURO KNEW THAT WELL.
.....
OKAY THEN, BEAST.
I PUT UP WITH YOU BECAUSE I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT LEAD ME TO YUGURO,

HM? SO YOU'RE FIGHTING?
THAT'S GOOD.
BUT IF YOU'RE JUST GOING TO KILL ME HERE, THEN I HAVE NO REASON TO ANYMORE.
CLINK
ISN'T THIS GREAT, KAHM?
NOW YOU'LL GET THAT FAIR FIGHT YOU WANTED.
TURN
WHO SAID ANYTHING ABOUT A FIGHT?
HEY...!
DASH
?!

SWSH
PUNCH
KNAP
WAIT!!
KSHH
GRR

BAM
clack
SWISH
GAAA AAH!
cRUNch

SWSH
SWISH
UGH!
Whap
Whap

SLAM!
GA AA AA AH H H!

SO,
NOW WHAT? YOUR TURN?
BUT I HAVE NO CHOICE...!
clench
FOR DOM TO GET BEATEN THIS EASILY...
nod
SHAKE
SHAKE
TAP
TAP

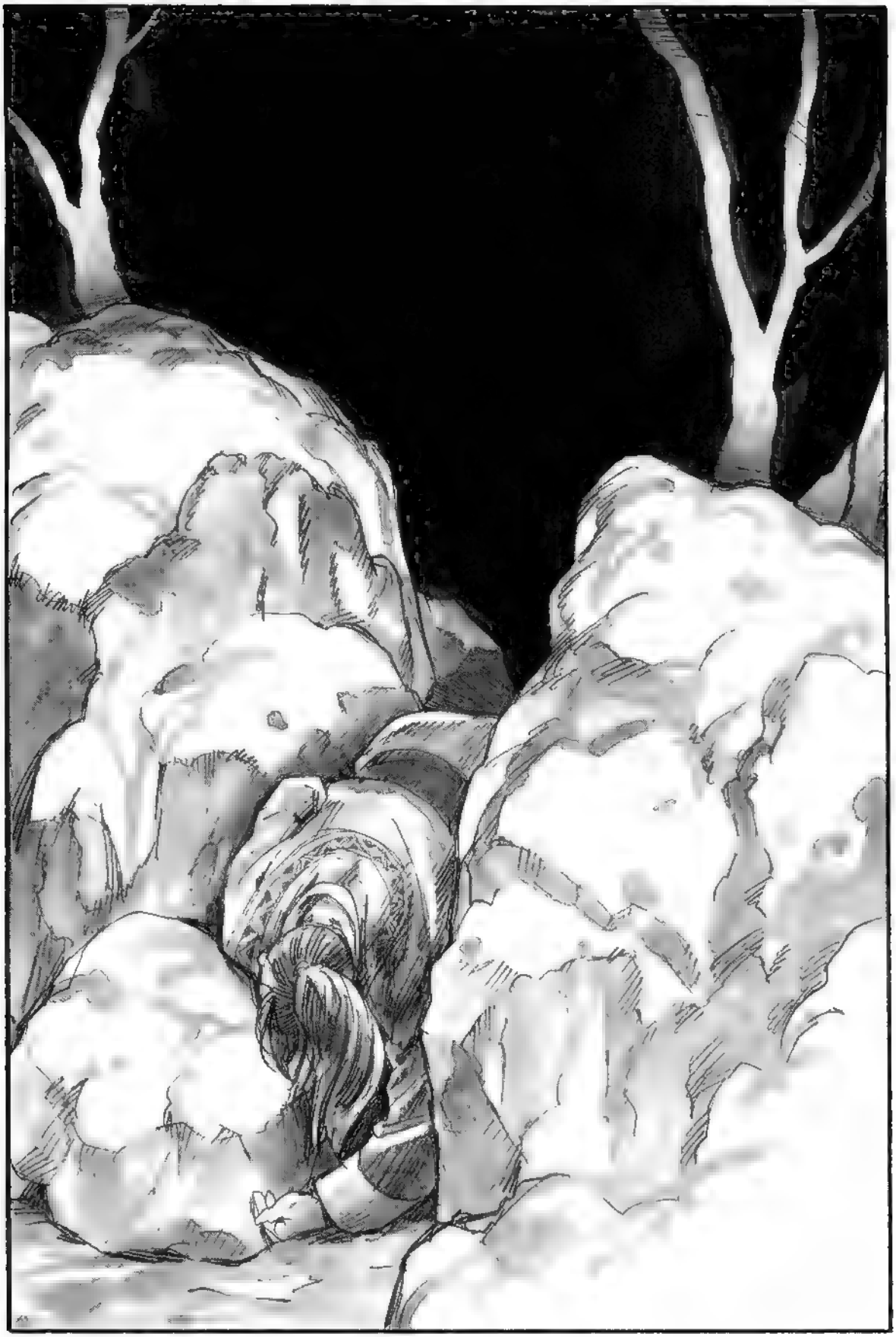
CLINK
HE ACTUALLY THREW THE SPEAR WITH HIS PARTNER IN THE LINE OF FIRE!..
Oh!
fwoosh
gshh

togal = a poison

WHAM
I'M OUT OF TIME...!
SPLASH
SPLASH
thud

Haa
Haa
Haa

Haa
Haa
Haa
Haa
Haa
MY FEET ARE NUMB...
I CAN'T...
Thud
Slide



HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLD YOU TO NEVER LET YOUR GUARD DOWN?

JIGURO
.....
DON'T EVER TURN YOUR BACK TO THE ENEMY!
UGH...
DRAG

hoot
hoot
WHEW...
I GUESS THE POISON WASN'T FATAL.
THANK GOOD-NESS I CAN STILL MOVE...
SWISH
OKAY, THEN...
NOW WHAT...?
I CAN SEE EVERY LITTLE THING. IS THIS BECAUSE OF THE POISON...?

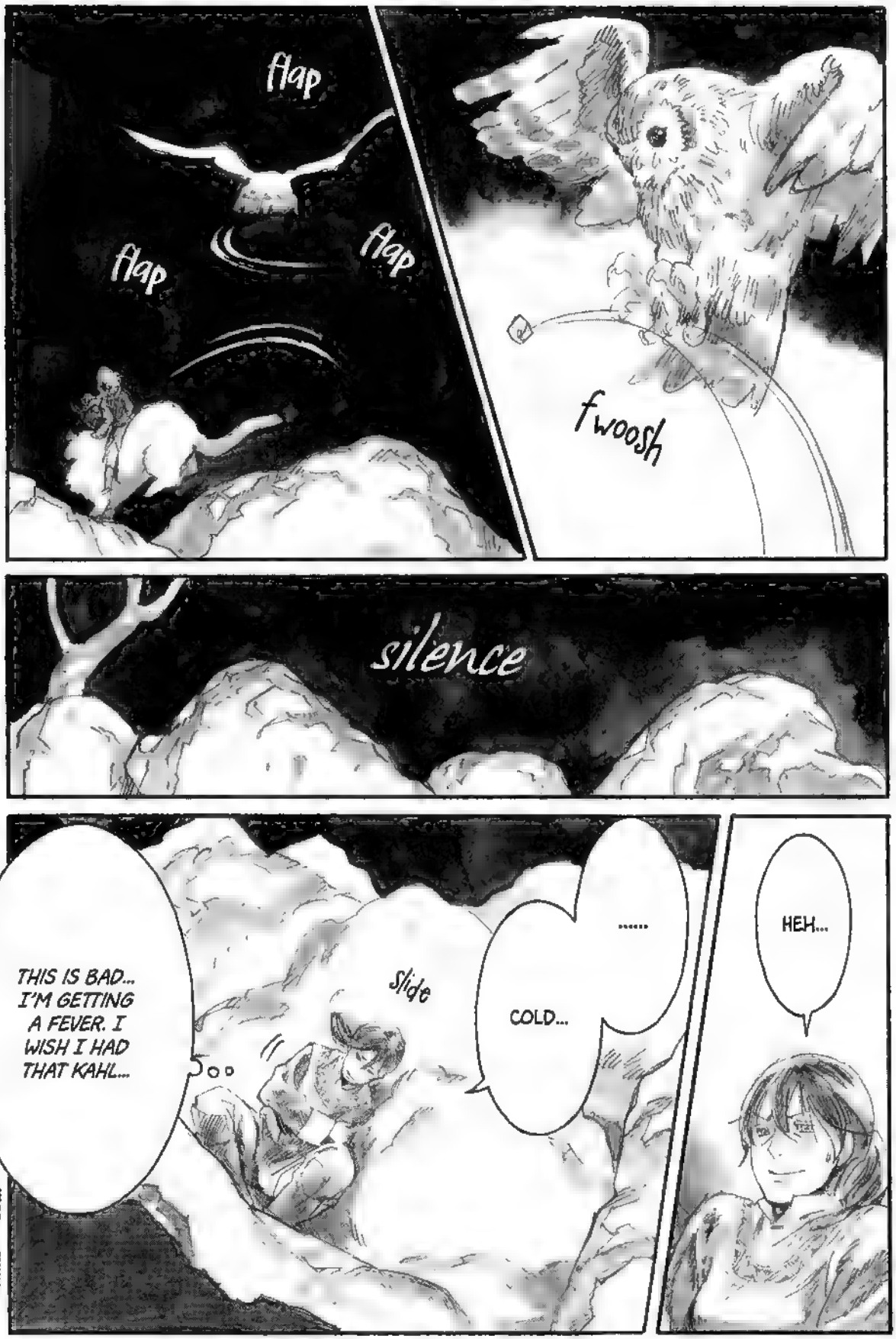
WHEN I GOT CAUGHT, I DECIDED TO GO ALONG IF IT MEANT SEEING YUGURO.
BUT I WAS TOO NAIVE.
OF COURSE YUGURO WOULDN'T LET HIS HERO GUISE SLIP AWAY.
HE'LL THINK OF ANOTHER REASON TO KILL ME.
INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE HAVE POWER.
I DON'T STAND A CHANCE OF TAKING ON A MAN AS INFLUENTIAL AS YUGURO ALL BY MYSELF.
IF IT COULD BE DONE, THEN MY DAD AND JIGURO WOULDN'T HAVE HAD TO GO THROUGH ALL THAT...
grit

HEH...
WHAT AN INSIGNIFI-CANT LIFE.
THAT WAS HOW WE RESISTED...
ALL JIGURO AND I COULD DO WAS RUN...
THE MOON LOOKS STRANGE.
IT'S BRIGHTER THAN USUAL.
WE WERE LIVING JUST TO SURVIVE.
JUST LIKE RATS RUNNING AWAY FROM AN OWL,
WE NEVER MADE ANY-THING,
NEVER CREATED ANY-THING.

.....FIRE-FLIES?
tap
tap
IN THIS COLD WEATHER?
tap
tap
tap

ON NIGHTS WHEN THE MOON SHINES BEAUTI-FULLY,
THE "ERMINE HUNTERS", THE TITI LAN, GO HUNTING.
DON'T CLIMB UP THE ROCKS WHEN THE MOON IS BRIGHT.
AREN'T THE TITI LAN SUPER SUPER SMALL?
WHY?
THEY ARE SMALL, BUT THEY'RE FRIGHTENING HUNTERS.
IF YOU GET IN THEIR WAY, THEY'LL CURSE YOU AND MAKE YOU LOSE YOUR MIND...
CAN'T BE...

tap
bzzt
flap
WHAP
grab
fwip


flap
flap
flap
fwoosh
silence
THIS IS BAD... I'M GETTING A FEVER. I WISH I HAD THAT KAHL...
slide
COLD...
.....
HEH...

kahl = coat

flop
.....
"BIG HUNTER"
TOH LAN.

THANK YOU FOR SAVING MY LIFE.
IN RETURN, TITI LAN WILL REPAY YOU BY SAVING YOURS.
TOGAL IS THE POISON THAT THE "BIG BROTHERS" TOH KAL USE TO FIGHT EAGLES.
THEY HAVE AN ANTIDOTE.
I'LL BRING THEM TO YOU.
SNIFF
SMELLS LIKE TOGAL.

PLEASE DON'T CALL THEM.
BUT THE TOH LAN ARE TRYING TO CAPTURE ME.
.....THANK YOU FOR THE THOUGHT,
FUWEEE
I SAID I'D CALL THE BIG BROTHERS, THE TOH KAL.
Heh.
I DIDN'T SAY I'D CALL THE TOH LAN.
FUWEEEE

TAP
TAP
TAP
TAP
OH...
THE SHEPHERDS.
TITI LAN,
WE HEARD YOUR WHISTLE.
WHO IS THIS?

SHE SAYS SHE'S BEING PURSUED.
...IT LOOKS LIKE SHE WAS POISONED WITH TOGAL.
I DON'T KNOW.
SHE SAVED ME WHEN I WAS ATTACKED BY AN OWL,
SO I WANT TO SAVE HER TOO.
SMELLS LIKE IRON, TOO. MAYBE STRUCK BY A SPEAR?
YEAH, THIS SMELLS LIKE TOGAL.
nod
GO BACK TO HUNTING WHILE THE MOON IS STILL BRIGHT.
LEAVE HER TO US.
"LITTLE BROTHER" CHIL KAL,

bounce
MAY YOUR GOATS FROLIC ACROSS THE ROCKS IN GOOD HEALTH!
THANK YOU, "BIG BROTHER" TOH KAL.

DAD...
.....
I'LL... ATONE FOR YOUR CRIMES, SO YOU CAN REST EASY.
I'LL SAVE THE LIVES OF EIGHT PEOPLE AND ATONE FOR YOU!
SAVING PEOPLE IS HARDER THAN KILLING THEM.
DON'T BE SO HARD ON YOURSELF.

BALSA... I WAS THINKING THINGS OVER AS I DREAMT...
I'LL SINK BENEATH THE MOUNTAINS OF YUSA, THE MOTHER RANGE, AND ATONE FOR MY OWN SINS.
SOMEWHERE ALONG THE WAY?
WOULD I HAVE HAD A BETTER LIFE IF I'D MADE A DIFFERENT CHOICE
THE ANSWER...
IS THAT IF I HAD TO LIVE MY LIFE ALL OVER AGAIN,
I WOULD STILL MAKE THE SAME CHOICES.

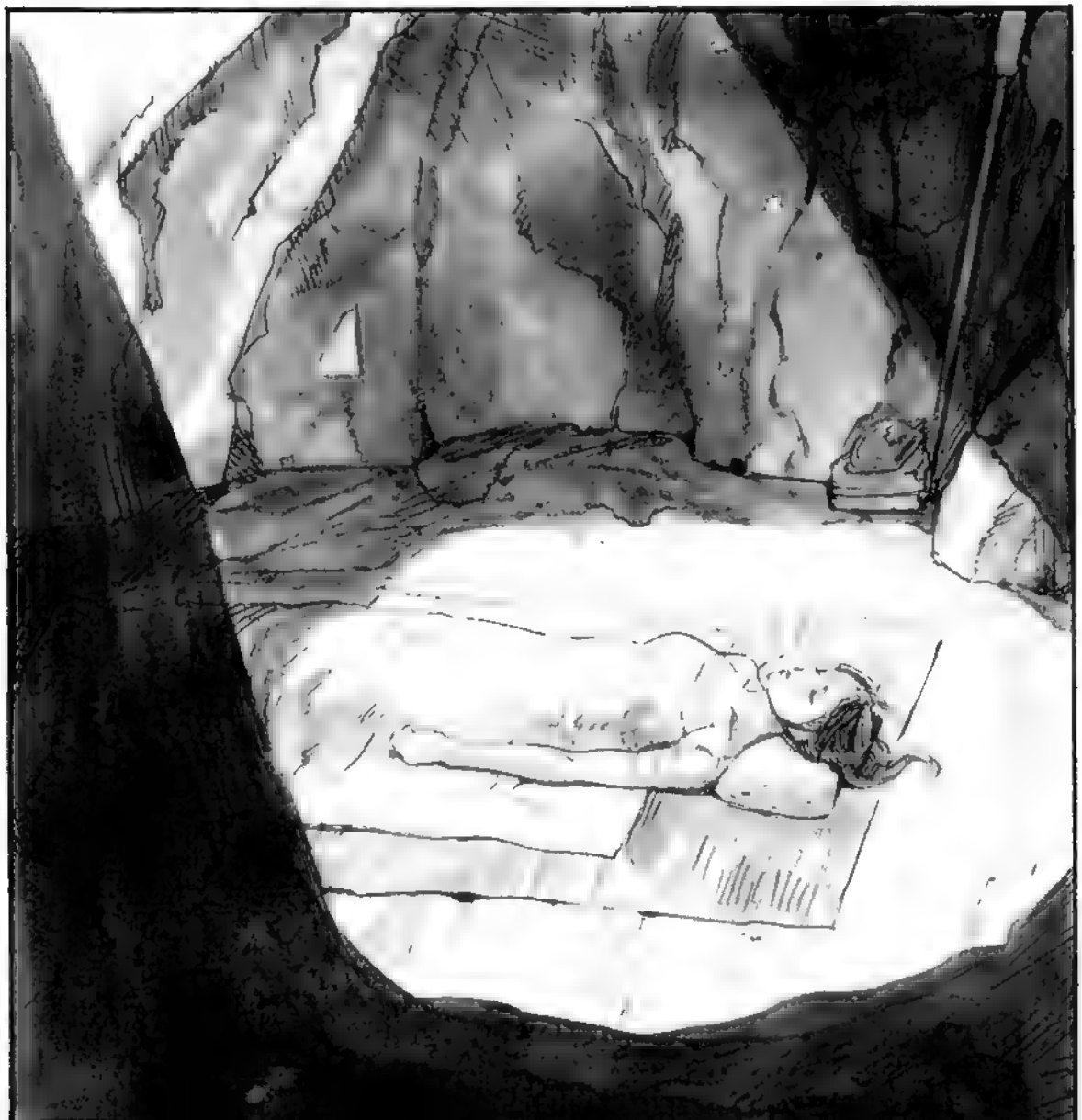
RUSTLE
I
COULDN'T HAVE CHOSEN ANY OTHER PATH THAN THIS.
...THAT'S WHY I HAVE NO REGRETS.
BUT IF I HAD ONE,
IT'S THAT I COULDN'T SET YOU FREE.

I COULDN'T ERASE THE HEAVY SHADOW THAT I CAST ON YOU.
SQUEEZE
DAD...
...I'LL TRY AND DO THAT MYSELF.
EVER SINCE YOU WERE A CHILD, YOU ALWAYS HAD AN UNQUENCH-ABLE ANGER WITHIN YOU.
THAT ANGER HAS BEEN YOUR SAVIOR... BUT IT'S ALSO BEEN YOUR CURSE...

YOU WILL BE MORE AT PEACE...
BALSA...
IF YOU CAN GET THROUGH THAT ANGER,
I'LL TRY TO BREAK THROUGH IT.
JIGURO...

INSTEAD OF RUNNING AWAY FROM THE OWL'S CLAWS, I'LL RUN UP THOSE CLAWS AND SINK MY TEETH INTO ITS NECK.
AND FOR THE FIRST TIME, THAT OWL WILL FEEL THE RAT'S PAIN.
I JUST WANTED REVENGE FOR MY OWN PAIN.
clench
THAT'S RIGHT.
I NEVER HAD A REAL REASON.

I'LL BREAK THROUGH AND SEE FOR MYSELF WHAT'S ON THE OTHER SIDE...



Yami no Moribito

"Guardian of the Darkness"

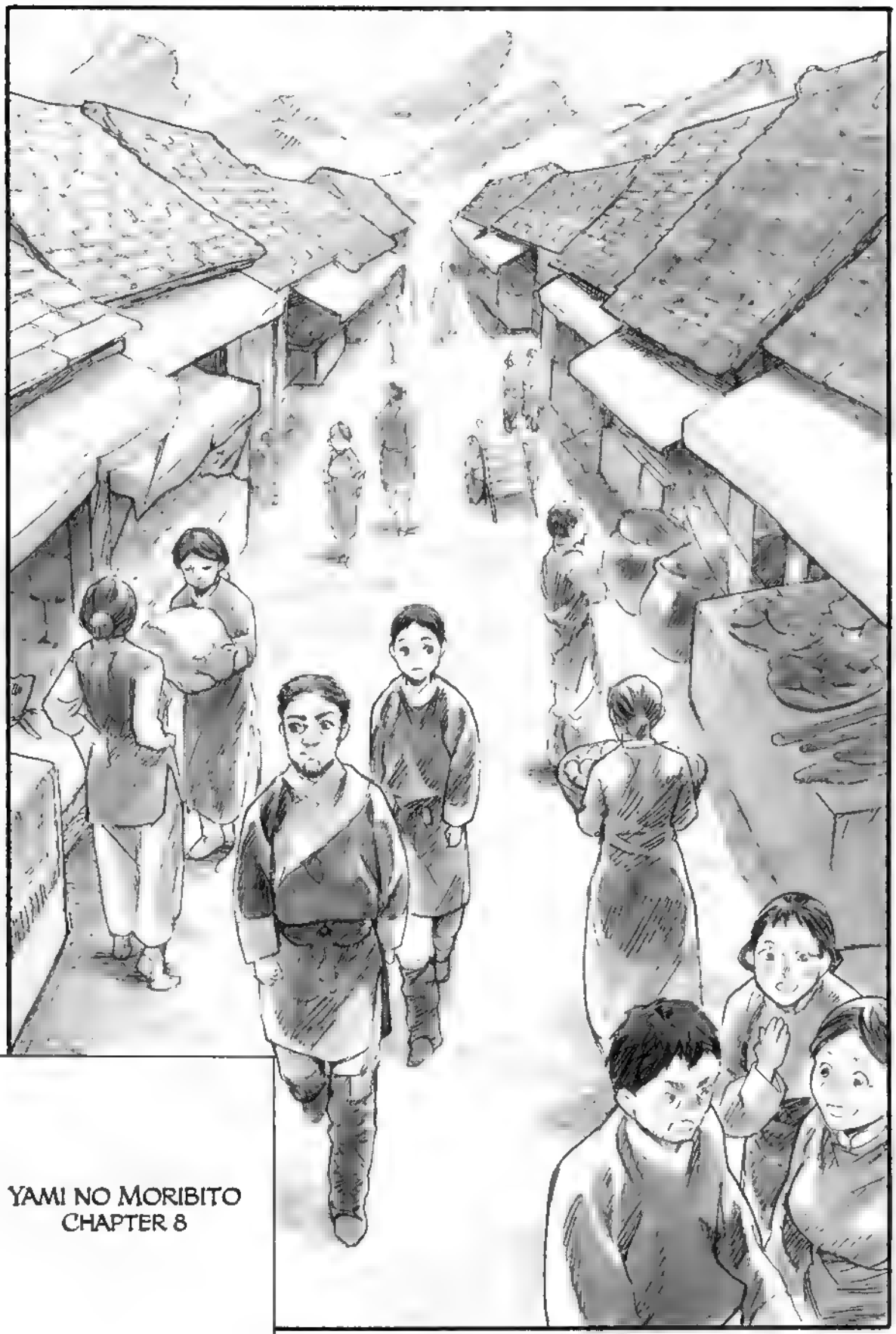
By Uehashi Nahoko

Illustrated by Yuu

Scanlation:
Lovely Strange Dark
LSD.mangadex.com

Chapter Eight

Raws: Kalendel
Translation: Den
Editing: Samara &
Nutritious Milk
QC: Ianu


YAMI NO MORIBITO
CHAPTER 8

CHATTER
CHATTER
CHATTER
I HEARD KAHM AND CAPTAIN DOM CAME BACK INJURED. IS THAT TRUE?
I WAS ONLY THERE FOR PART OF THE TRIP,
BUT I THINK THAT WOMAN THEY CAPTURED DID SOMETHING TO THEM.
THAT'S TERRIBLE...
C'MON, KASSA. HURRY UP.

CHATTER
CHATTER
EVERYONE.
thump
I ASKED YOU ALL TO COME TODAY BECAUSE A GRAVE INCIDENT HAS OCCURRED THAT AFFECTS THE HONOR OF OUR CLAN.

YUGURO WILL TELL YOU THE DETAILS.

A GHOST THAT I MYSELF ONCE DEFEATED...
THOSE OF YOU OVER THIRTY WILL PROBABLY REMEMBER, BUT AN OLD GHOST HAS COME BACK TO MUSA.

A MAN THAT BOTH THE CHIEF AND I ARE ASHAMED TO CONTINUE CALLING OUR BROTHER...

WARRIORS OF MUSA.

THE GHOST OF JIGURO,
THE MOST DESPICABLE MAN IN KANBAL.
WHEN JIGURO STOLE THE GOLD RINGS FROM THE KING'S SPEARS, THE SYMBOL OF THE BOND BETWEEN THE ROYAL FAMILY AND THE CLANS,
I WAS ONLY SIXTEEN.
MY FATHER DIED FROM AN ILLNESS, AND MY BROTHER KAGURO LOST HIS RIGHT ARM IN AN ACCIDENT.
CHATTER
THEN THE STRONGEST WARRIOR FROM EACH OF KANBAL'S EIGHT CLANS WOULDN'T HAVE DIED.
IF THAT ACCIDENT HADN'T HAPPENED... OR PERHAPS IF I'D BEEN IN MY TWENTIES AT THE TIME,

BUT HIS HEART WAS ROTTEN.
I WASN'T LIKE HIM, AND THAT'S WHY I HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO FIGHT HIM.
JIGURO WAS FRIGHTEN-INGLY STRONG.
AS THE LAST PERSON TO CLASH SPEARS WITH HIM, I KNOW THAT BETTER THAN ANYONE.
SHE WAS YOUNG, MAYBE 22 OR 23.
A WOMAN WAS WATCH-ING US FROM THE SIDE-LINES.
I'VE NEVER TOLD THIS TO ANYONE, BUT WHEN JIGURO AND I WERE FIGHTING,
BUT WHEN THAT YOUNG WOMAN SAW JIGURO DEAD, SHE HURLED CURSES AT ME.
I GAVE JIGURO AN HONORABLE DEATH WITH A FAIR FIGHT.

...HER?
Throb
I ONLY DID WHAT WAS RIGHT. BUT WOMEN, WELL...
HONOR DOESN'T MEAN ANYTHING TO THE PERSON KILLED, NO MATTER IF IT WAS A FAIR FIGHT OR NOT.
IT'S JUST AN EXCUSE TO JUSTIFY KILLING THEM.
...YOUR UNCLE JIGURO KNEW THAT WELL.

Ahahaha
Ahahaha
YOU JUST CAN'T UNDERSTAND THEM.
I'M SURE EVERYONE HERE HAS SOME EXPERIENCE WITH THAT.
TONNO! KASSA! COME HERE.
I DIDN'T TAKE IT SERIOUSLY, SO I'D FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT IT.
BUT THAT WOMAN HAS NOW APPEARED IN KANBAL.

!!

KASSA AND HIS YOUNGER SISTER, GINA, ARE BOTH MY SISTER'S KIDS. GINA'S A BRAVE GIRL, JUST LIKE MY SISTER.

I'M SURE YOU ALREADY KNOW THESE TWO.

HE LEFT OUT THE PART WHERE SHE SAVED US FROM THE HYOLHU...

UH, UM...

THEY MET A WOMAN IN THE CAVES WHO CAME FROM NEW YOGO.

SHE WANTED TO GAIN THE UPPER HAND AGAINST MY SON AND WENT INTO THE CAVES AS A TEST OF COURAGE.

HER BROTHER KASSA WENT AFTER HER TO SAVE HER.

KASSA MAY BE YOUNG, BUT HE REALLY IS A WARRIOR OF THE MUSA CLAN.

HE KNEW FINDING A STRANGER IN THE CAVES COULD SPELL DANGER, SO HE TOLD ME IMMEDIATELY.

THAT WOMAN TOLD KASSA AND GINA THAT SHE WAS ON A "JOURNEY OF ATONEMENT", AND SHE ASKED THEM TO KEEP IT A SECRET.

!!

Squeeze

HE MAY BE SMALL, BUT HE'S BRAVE AND SMART.

I UNDER-ESTIMATED KASSA HERE.

Smile

BUT I DIDN'T WANT EVERYONE FINDING OUT ABOUT THIS, SO I TOLD THEM TO SAY THAT THEY FOUND A LYOKUHAKU.

I GAVE THE CHILDREN A REWARD FOR THE VALUABLE INFORMATION.

THAT'S NOT TRUE.

WHY IS HE LYING LIKE THIS...?

THEY DID A WONDERFUL JOB OF FINDING AND CATCHING HER, EVEN THOUGH SHE WAS LAYING LOW IN YONSA TERRITORY.
I IMMEDIATELY ASKED DOM AND KAHM TO GO AFTER THE WOMAN.
THAT WAS YESTERDAY.
BUT THIS WOMAN IS AS CUNNING AS A WOLF.
AS THEY WERE TRAVERSING THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS, SHE PURPOSELY FELL OFF HER HORSE AND PRETENDED TO BE HURT.
THAT WAS WHY I ASKED THEM TO CAPTURE HER WITH FULL CONFIDENCE.
WELL, KAHM IS STILL YOUNG, BUT HE'S GETTING CLOSE TO BEING THE BEST.
AS EVERYONE ALSO KNOWS, KAHM AND DOM ARE TWO OF OUR BEST SPEARMEN.

AS DOM WAS GETTING OFF HIS HORSE TO HELP HER, SHE SUDDENLY SPOOKED BOTH THEIR HORSES.
DOM FELL OFF HIS HORSE AND BROKE HIS NOSE, AND KAHM CRACKED HIS RIBS.
EVEN THEN, DOM STILL TRIED TO CATCH HER. BUT THE WOMAN STABBED HIM IN THE SHOULDER WITH HER SPEAR.
...ISN'T THAT RIGHT, KAHM?

...I'M NOT CRITICIZING YOU. YOU COULDN'T DO ANYTHING.
YOU'RE STILL YOUNG, AND YOUR CRACKED RIBS PROBABLY HURT.
NO! THAT'S NOT...
DOM WAS...!
THERE'S NO REASON TO BE EMBARRASSED JUST BECAUSE YOU COULDN'T HELP DOM AS HE FOUGHT THE WOMAN, BROKEN NOSE AND ALL.
N...!

F-
FATHER...
ARE YOU PLANNING TO USE DOM AS AN EXCUSE WHEN HE ISN'T EVEN HERE?!
KAHM, HAVE SOME SHAME!
SO THIS IS WHY YUGURO TOLD DOM NOT TO COME...!
KAGURO,
KAHM IS STILL YOUNG.
DON'T BE SO HARSH ON HIM.

I'VE RAMBLED ON, BUT I WANTED YOU ALL TO KNOW THAT THIS WOMAN ESCAPED SOMEWHERE IN MUSA TERRITORY.
SHE'S ON THE RUN WITHOUT A COAT OR SUPPLIES, SO SHE WON'T BE ABLE TO LAST LONG IN THIS WEATHER.
I WOULD LIKE AT LEAST FIFTY OF OUR BEST WARRIORS TO SPLIT UP AND SEARCH FOR HER.
GET THE SHEPHERDS TO HELP, TOO.
I'VE SAID IT BEFORE, BUT DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE HER WIT AND HER SKILL WITH A SPEAR.
AND OF COURSE, DON'T BELIEVE WHATEVER TERRIBLE THINGS SHE SAYS ABOUT ME.
Hahahaha
bwooo
bwooo
THAT'S THE HORN FOR THE KING'S MESSENGERS!
CHATTER

THE KING HAS AN URGENT MESSAGE FOR YUGURO MUSA!

twish

GREETINGS TO KAGURO AND YUGURO OF THE MUSA CLAN!

bam

.....

RUSTLE

WE HAVE NEWS FROM THE KING.

MY CLANSMEN,

I'LL START PREPARING IMMEDIATELY. PLEASE GIVE ME TWO DAYS TO MAKE MY PREPARATIONS TO GO TO THE CAPITAL.

UNDERSTOOD.

THANK YOU FOR DELIVERING THIS ALL THE WAY HERE.

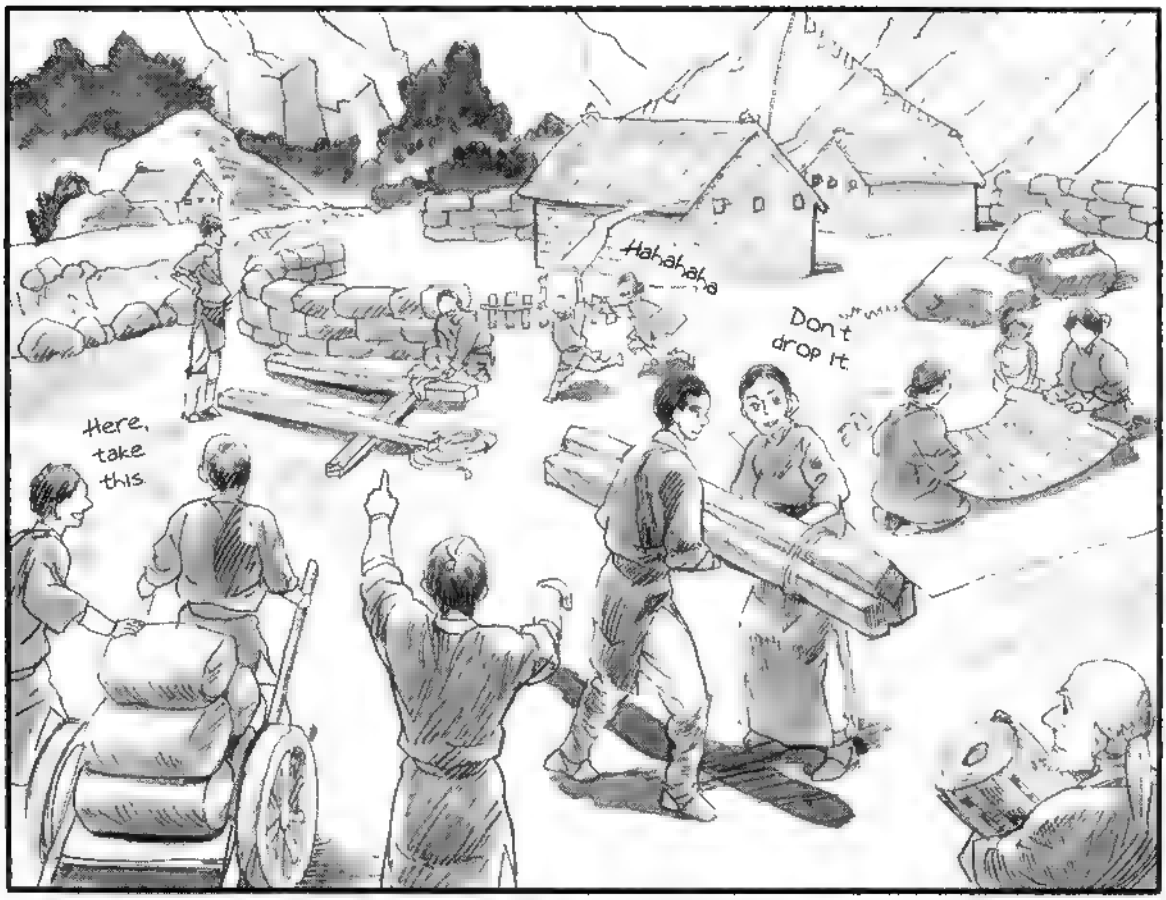
THE DOOR TO THE MOUNTAIN DEEP HAS FINALLY OPENED!
GUN
WHAT ...?!
THAT'S GOOD NEWS!
SO OUR BOND WITH THE MOUNTAIN KING IS STILL STRONG...!
R-ahh!
I THOUGHT THE MOUNTAIN KING WAS ANGRY BECAUSE OF JIGURO'S BETRAYAL!
DID YOU HEAR ...?!
NOW WE DON'T NEED TO WORRY ABOUT OUR WINTER RESERVES FOR YEARS TO COME!

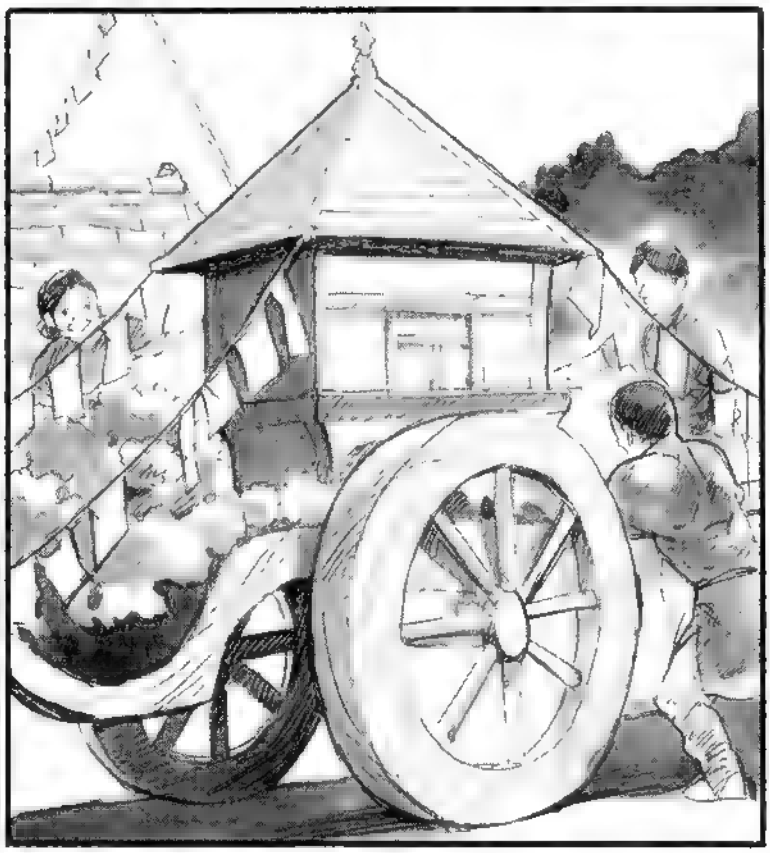
fwoooo
I BET LESS THAN HALF THE PEOPLE IN THIS ROOM REMEMBER THE LAST CEREMONY.
IT USED TO HAPPEN ONCE EVERY 20 YEARS... BUT IT'S BEEN 35 YEARS SINCE THE LAST LUISHA GIVING CEREMONY...
THE CEREMONY HAS FINALLY COME!
IT SEEMS FITTING FOR SOMETHING SO MOMENTOUS TO HAPPEN IN THE MIDST OF ALL THIS.

Rahh!
OKAY, WARRIORS! SINCE WE'LL ALL BE GETTING BUSY, I'D LIKE YOU TO DIVIDE THE WORK BETWEEN YOURSELVES.
THE GIFTS FROM THE MUSA CLAN TO THE MOUNTAIN KING SHOULD BE READY BY TOMORROW AFTERNOON.
YES, SIR!
IT'S NORMALLY KAHM WHO ACCOMPANIES ME ON MY TRIPS TO THE CAPITAL. BUT AS YOU CAN SEE, HE IS INJURED.
IN HIS CONDITION, HE CAN'T POSSIBLY RIDE A HORSE FOR DAYS ON END.
AND THERE'S ONE MORE THING
I'D LIKE TO ASK OF YOU.

CHATTER
SO IN THE MEANTIME, I WOULD LIKE SHISHEEM TO ACCOMPANY ME TO THE CAPITAL.
SHISHEEM TURNED 16 THIS YEAR.
I THINK IT'S THE RIGHT AGE FOR HIM TO GO TO THE PALACE AND FORGE BONDS WITH THE SONS OF THE OTHER CLAN CHIEFS.
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS...

YOU CAN CATCH UP WITH US WHEN YOU'VE FULLY HEALED.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY, KAHM. THE LUISHA GIVING CEREMONY WON'T BEGIN UNTIL 25 DAYS AFTER THE GATES TO THE MOUNTAIN DEEP OPEN.
YES, SIR!
WELL THEN, WARRIORS OF MUSA,
LET'S GET TO WORK!
CHATTER
CHATTER
CHATTER
PUMP
glank


Here, take this
Hahahaha
Don't drop it



HE PROBABLY WANTS SHISHEEM TO ACCOMPANY HIM TO THE CEREMONY...

UNCLE YUGURO...

THEN, WHEN THEY TURN 20, THEY ARE CHOSEN TO BE THE NEXT GROUP OF KING'S SPEARS.

IN THE TOTAL DARKNESS OF THE MOUNTAIN DEEP, THE KING'S SPEARS AND THE ATTENDANTS HOLD A CONTEST OF SKILL THAT SERVES AS THEIR TRIAL.

TO BE A MEMBER OF THE KING'S SPEARS, KANBAL'S FINEST WARRIORS, YOU NEED TO ATTEND THE LUISHA GIVING CEREMONY WHEN YOU TURN 16 OR 17 AS AN ATTENDANT OF ONE OF THE CURRENT KING'S SPEARS.

HOWEVER, IT'S BEEN 35 YEARS SINCE THE LAST CEREMONY, AND JIGURO KILLED ALL THE ATTENDANTS FROM THAT GROUP.
AND SO, 20 YEARS AFTER THE GIVING CEREMONY, THEY WOULD HAVE MATURED INTO A FORMIDABLE CIRCLE OF KING'S SPEARS. THIS IS HOW IT'S BEEN SINCE THE BEGINNING.
AND SHISHEEM IS 16... THE PERFECT AGE TO BE AN ATTENDANT.
DOES UNCLE YUGURO WANT ME TO FOLLOW MY FATHER'S FOOTSTEPS AND BE THE CLAN CHIEF WHILE SHISHEEM BECOMES THE KING'S SPEAR...?
I SHOULD HAVE BEEN CHOSEN WHEN I WAS 16, BUT NOW I'M 31...

THE MASTER PLAN HE'S BEEN WORK-ING ON FOR YEARS...
TO NOT BE THERE WHEN THE CEREMONY HAPPENS AND MY UNCLE FINALLY CARRIES OUT
A PLAN THAT I WORKED SO HARD ON. AND MY UNCLE...
A PLAN SO SECRET THAT FATHER DOESN'T EVEN KNOW ABOUT IT.
IT COULD'VE HIT ME TOO.
I DIDN'T KNOW DOM'S SPEAR WAS TIPPED WITH POISON.

COULD YUGURO BE..?
NO, I'M JUST OVERTHINKING THINGS.
DOM DID THAT ON HIS OWN.
IT'S JUST LIKE HIM.
...THAT'S RIGHT, MY FATHER ONCE SAID SOME-THING...
IF JIGURO WAS THE ONE WHO TAUGHT HER,
...BUT EVEN SO... SHE HAS SUCH IMPRESSIVE SKILLS WITH THE SPEAR.
THEN HE MUST HAVE BEEN A FEARSOME MASTER.

clink
clang
clang
clang
clang
LONG AGO...
Hyah!
thud
flip
NEXT!!

HUH?

HE HAS TOO MUCH WASTED MOVEMENT...

YUGURO REALLY IS IMPRES-SIVE...

O.o

JIGURO, HOWEVER, WAS A GENIUS.

YOU PROBABLY WON'T BELIEVE ME, BUT I WAS ALWAYS A BETTER FIGHTER THAN YUGURO.

THE KIND OF GENIUS THAT COMES MAYBE ONCE EVERY HUNDRED YEARS...

JIGURO WAS FAR MORE SKILLED.

WHAT? AN ATTENDANT WAS THE DANCER...?
AT 16 HE WAS CHOSEN AS THE DANCER EVEN THOUGH HE WAS JUST AN ATTENDANT. IT WAS HISTORIC.
AND HE EXCEEDED MY FATHER'S EXPECTATIONS.
THAT WAS WHY OUR FATHER CHOSE HIM TO ATTEND THE LUISHA GIVING CEREMONY AND NOT ME.
YES...
IN THE CEREMONIAL AREA IN FRONT OF THE PALACE IN THE MOUNTAIN DEEP, THE KING'S SPEARS AND THEIR ATTENDANTS HOLD A COMPETITION. THE PERSON WHO COMES OUT ON TOP BECOMES THE DANCER.
THE DANCER IS KANBAL'S STRONGEST WARRIOR, THE ONE CHOSEN TO FIGHT THE GUARDIAN OF DARKNESS, THE HYOHLU.
ONCE THE DANCER DEFEATS THE HYOHLU, THE MOUNTAIN KING OPENS THE FINAL DOOR.
IT IS SAID THAT HE INVITES THE KING OF KANBAL, THE KING'S SPEARS, AND THEIR ATTENDANTS INSIDE HIS CASTLE—A CASTLE BUILT OF LUISHA, THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GEM IN THE WORLD.

THAT'S WHY I THINK

THAT JIGURO LET YUGURO WIN AGAINST HIM.

...ALTHOUGH TO BE HONEST, I PROBABLY WOULD HAVE LOST AS WELL IF I HAD FOUGHT HIM.

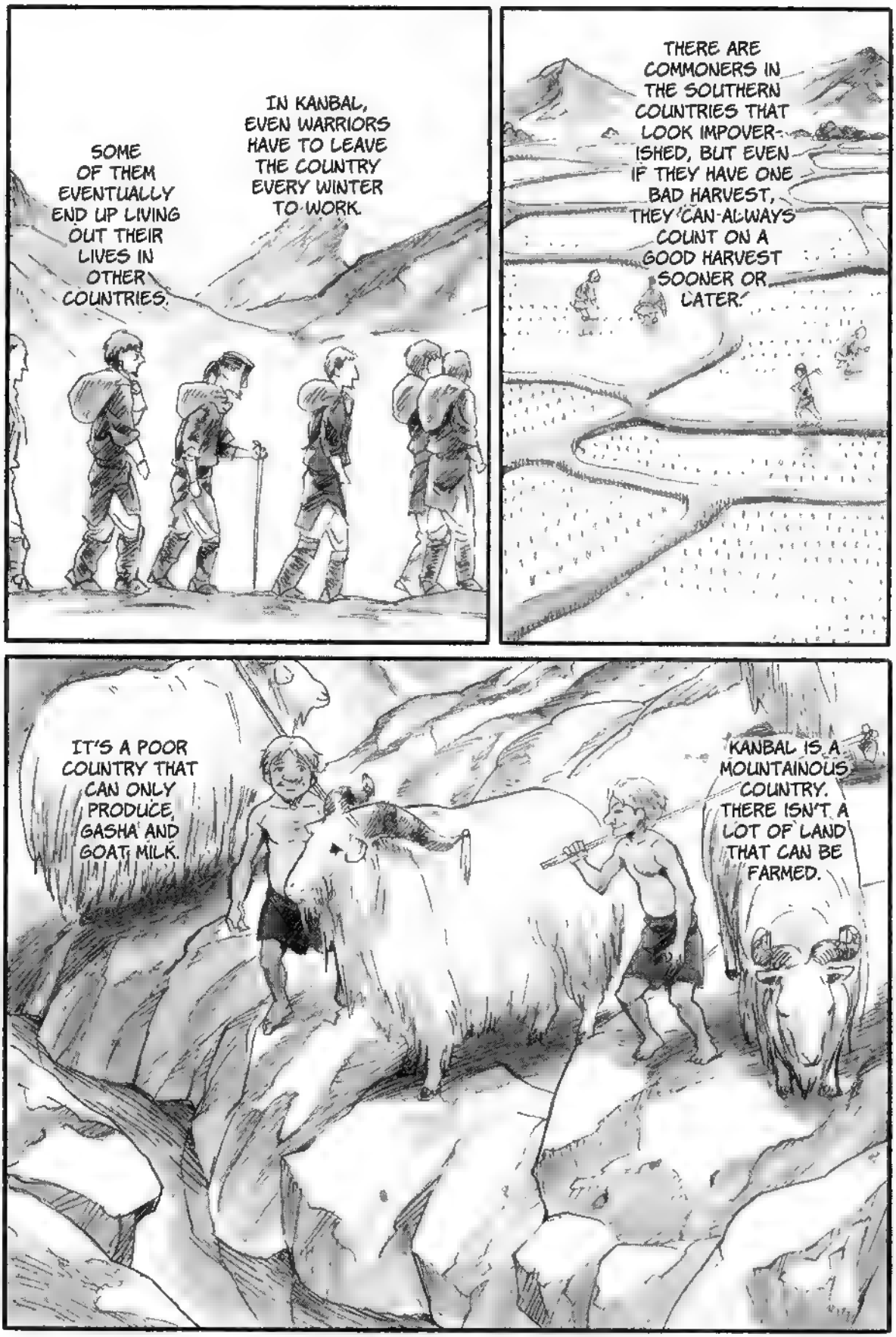
BUT JIGURO ONLY BROUGHT RUIN UPON THE COUN-TRY...

BACK THEN, I THOUGHT FATHER WAS JUST BELITTLING YUGURO BECAUSE HE WAS JEALOUS...

BUT I HAVE A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS.

WHAT DID SHE SEE WHEN JIGURO AND YUGURO FOUGHT?
WHAT KIND OF MAN WAS JIGURO, TO BE ABLE TO TRAIN THAT WOMAN TO THAT LEVEL OF SKILL?
NO... I'M OVERTHINK-ING IT.
THEN I WOULD UNDERSTAND WHY YUGURO WOULD TIP HIS SPEAR WITH POISON AND TRY TO KILL HER TOO.
IF SHE SAW SOMETHING OTHER THAN THE VALIANT VICTORY THAT YUGURO CLAIMED,
UNCLE YUGURO WOULD NEVER DO SOMETHING SO DESPICA-BLE.
I'M THE ONE WHO'S TERRIBLE.
SHEESH, HOW CAN I THINK SO BADLY OF HIM JUST BECAUSE HE WAS HARSH TO ME THIS ONE TIME?

I...
SLIDE
EVEN THE CHIEF'S HOUSE HAS THESE SHABBY BEAMS..
THIS IS WHAT KANBAL HAS BECOME
I'VE TRAVELED WITH YUGURO TO NEW YOGO AND ROTA IN THE SOUTH, AND SANGAL EVEN FURTHER SOUTH, TO BUY GRAIN.
EVEN NORMAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS LIVE IN HOUSES SO BEAUTIFUL IT TAKES YOUR BREATH AWAY.


IN KANBAL, EVEN WARRIORS HAVE TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY EVERY WINTER TO WORK.
SOME OF THEM EVENTUALLY END UP LIVING OUT THEIR LIVES IN OTHER COUNTRIES.
THERE ARE COMMONERS IN THE SOUTHERN COUNTRIES THAT LOOK IMPOVERISHED, BUT EVEN IF THEY HAVE ONE BAD HARVEST, THEY CAN ALWAYS COUNT ON A GOOD HARVEST SOONER OR LATER.
IT'S A POOR COUNTRY THAT CAN ONLY PRODUCE GASHA AND GOAT MILK.
KANBAL IS A MOUNTAINOUS COUNTRY. THERE ISN'T A LOT OF LAND THAT CAN BE FARMED.

gasha = potatoes

WITHOUT THE LUISHA TO BUY GRAIN, KANBAL AS A COUNTRY WOULD NEVER BE ABLE TO SURVIVE ON ITS OWN...
RUSTLE
...YES.
YUGURO AND THE KING ARE RIGHT.
IF THE SURVIVING MEMBERS OF THE FORMER KING'S SPEARS, LIKE YONSA OF LALOOG, KNEW ABOUT THIS PLAN, THEY WOULD RISK THEIR LIVES TO STOP IT.
THAT'S WHY THE OLDER GENERATION CAN NEVER FIND OUT.

kree
fwoosh
...TWENTY DAYS UNTIL THE CERE-MONY.

Yami no Moribito

"Guardian of the Darkness"

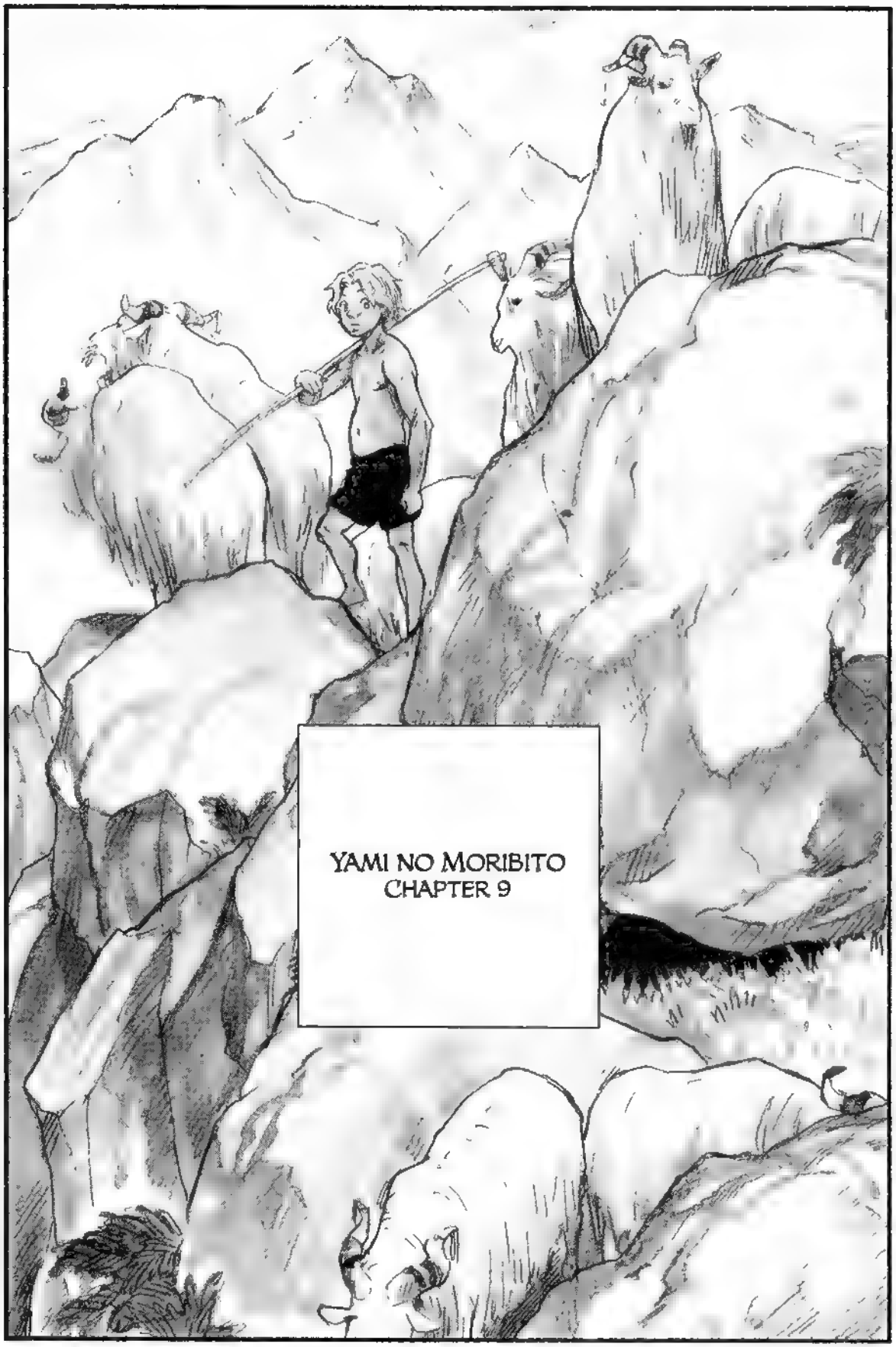
By Uehashi Nahoko

Illustrated by Yuu

Scanlation:
Lovely Strange Dark
lsd.mangadex.com

Chapter Nine

Raws: Kalendel
Translation: Den
Editing: Samara &
Nutritious Milk
QC: Ianu


YAMI NO MORIBITO
CHAPTER 9

WHAT'S WRONG, KASSA?
DIDN'T YOU PROMISE ME YOU'D DEFEND THE WOMAN WHO SAVED US?
SO WHY...
DAD...

...YUGURO MADE A POLITICAL DECISION TO PROTECT OUR CLAN WITHOUT CAUSING TROUBLE.
KASSA, YOU'RE AN ADULT NOW, SO REMEMBER THIS WELL.
WELL...
I UNDER-STAND,
BUT...

Hey
How goes it?
Nothing here!
HMM...
IT'S BEEN THREE DAYS, AND NO ONE HAS BEEN ABLE TO FIND THAT WOMAN...
THE FOOTPRINTS STOP HERE.
WE'VE SEARCHED THE AREA, BUT HAVEN'T FOUND ANY CLUES.

YEAH, THAT'S MY TAKE ON IT TOO. IT'S TERRIBLE.
I CAN'T STAND THE FACT THAT THE LIES STARTED WITH US.
OH...
IT'S LIKE THEY'RE PILING ON MORE LIES TO PROTECT THE FIRST ONE.

HEY,
CAN WE REALLY DO NOTHING?
Slide
THAT WOMAN SAVED OUR LIVES, RIGHT?
AND THEY'RE HUNTING HER BECAUSE WE BROKE OUR PROMISE AND TOLD THEM WE MET HER IN THE CAVE.
BUT DID YOU FORGET?
SHE WANTS TO HURT YUGURO BECAUSE OF THAT THIEF JIGURO.
AND SHE ENTERED THE CAVES ILLEGALLY ...
HOLD IT, KASSA!
THAT'S JUST WHAT YUGURO SAID, ISN'T IT?

I'D LIKE TO JUDGE FOR MYSELF WHAT I FELT AND WHAT I SAW.
I...
CLENCH
HUH?
LISTEN,
WHAT YOU HEAR FROM OTHER PEOPLE COULD ALSO BE LIES, SO PUT THAT ASIDE.
TRY TO REMEMBER, KASSA.
DID SHE SEEM LIKE A BAD PERSON?
SEE?

AND ALSO, EVEN IF SHE REALLY DID COME HERE TO SULLY YUGURO'S HONOR,
SHE DIDN'T IGNORE US WHEN WE NEEDED HER HELP.
IF THAT WAS HER REASON FOR COMING HERE, SHE COULD HAVE IGNORED OUR CRIES FOR HELP.
BECAUSE IF WE DIED AND THE HYOHLU ATE US, THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN NO ONE TO TELL ON HER.
...YEAH.

THAT'S TRUE. YOU'RE RIGHT, GINA.
THAT MAKES SENSE.
FWIII!
BUT... IS THERE ANYTHING WE CAN DO?
BEEP

THERE'S A SEARCH PARTY OF WARRIORS UP AHEAD.
YOU'LL BE IN TROUBLE IF THEY HEAR YOU.
Shhh
YOU SHOULDN'T SPEAK SO LOUDLY, KASSA.
VOICES TRAVEL FAR, ESPECIALLY IN ROCKY AREAS LIKE THESE.
EVERY-THING.
I'M SORRY FOR EAVES-DROPPING, BUT SOME-THING CAME UP...
YOYO!
HOW MUCH DID YOU HEAR?
jump

scratch scratch
PLEASE DON'T TELL ANYONE, NOT EVEN YOUR FAMILY.
YOYO...
WE WERE BEING CARELESS. EVERYTHING WE SAID IS SECRET.
ABSOLUTELY NOT!
...OF COURSE.
SO YOU WON'T BETRAY HER AGAIN?
DO YOU REALLY FEEL LIKE YOU OWE YOUR LIVES TO HER?
SO LONG AS SHE DOESN'T BRING RUIN TO THE MUSA CLAN.

YOU BOTH ANSWERED EXACTLY AS HE PREDICTED.
ELDER TOTO IS AMAZING.
COME WITH ME, QUIETLY IF YOU CAN.
AND DON'T SAY A WORD.
SO THESE ARE THE SHEPHERDS...

knock knock
WE'VE ARRIVED.
IT'S HERE.
clunk
clonk
roll

COME IN. WATCH YOUR STEP.
OKAY. KASSA, GINA.
...THE COAST IS CLEAR?
WE'RE GOOD. I WAS CAREFUL.
NO, SOMEONE HAS TO PUT THE ROCK BACK FROM THE OUTSIDE.
ISN'T YOYO COMING?
KASSA, HOLD GINA'S HAND.
OKAY, GINA. TAKE MY HAND.
lift

...HEY.

U-
UMM.....
UM, IT PROBABLY FELL FROM THE HYOHLU. AND THEN...
WE WEREN'T GOING TO, BUT I FOUND A LUISHA IN MY COLLAR.
I'M SORRY!
WE TOLD MOM AND DAD ABOUT YOU!

ELDER TOTO!!
HEY, HEY, YOU'RE SPEAKING TOO LOUDLY.
THEY CAN HEAR YOU THROUGH THAT HOLE IN THE ROCK.
KEEP IT DOWN.
WELL, I WAS PARTLY LYING AS WELL, SO LET'S JUST CALL IT EVEN.
I SEE. SO THAT'S WHAT HAP-PENED.

I'M BALSA, DAUGHTER OF KARUNA FROM THE YONSA CLAN.
KASSA AND GINA, RIGHT? LET ME INTRODUCE MYSELF PROPERLY.
SHE WAS GRAZED BY A SPEAR POISONED WITH TOGAL.
YOU KNOW WE USE TOGAL TO BRING DOWN EAGLES, SO WE ALSO KNOW HOW TO COUNTERACT THE POISON.
...ARE YOU HURT?

laga = goat cheese
lakalle = drink made from goat's milk

UM...
DID YOU GET INJURED WHEN YOU FELL OFF THE HORSE?
HM? NO, I DIDN'T FALL OFF A HORSE.
A HUGE WARRIOR THREW A SPEAR AT ME WHILE MY BACK WAS TURNED, AND I WASN'T ABLE TO DODGE IT... WANT TO SEE?
I'VE REGAINED MY STRENGTH ON DELICIOUS LAGA AND LAKALLE.
I CAN'T THANK TOTO ENOUGH.
AND IT'S SO WARM HERE THAT I CAN SLEEP WITHOUT LIGHTING A FIRE.
THANKS TO THAT, THE NUMBNESS HAS PASSED.
rustle

...KASSA?
WHAT FOR?
HOW MANY LIES DID YUGURO TELL DURING THAT SPEECH?
EVEN IF SHE WAS PLANNING SOMETHING SINISTER, WHY KILL HER BEFORE SHE GOT A FAIR TRIAL?
POISON...
WHY DID YOU COME BACK TO KANBAL?
Oh!

THE REASON I CAME BACK TO KANBAL
IS TO BURY A GHOST WITHIN ME.
WHEN I WAS SIX, I GOT CAUGHT UP IN A CONSPIRACY AND HAD TO FLEE THE CAPITAL.

THAT WAS 25 YEARS AGO. I FLED WITH MY FATHER'S FRIEND TO NEW YOGO.
THAT FRIEND DIED OF A SUDDEN ILLNESS, BUT I ALWAYS FELT LIKE HE SACRIFICED HIS LIFE FOR MINE...
THAT THOUGHT HAS ALWAYS STAYED WITH ME.

SO I CAME BACK HERE BECAUSE I WANTED TO CONFRONT THE PAST.
I WENT BACK TO THE CAVES I FIRST VISITED AS A CRYING SIX-YEAR-OLD HOLDING HIS HAND.
THAT'S WHAT WAS GOING THROUGH MY MIND WHEN I WAS WALKING THROUGH THE CAVES AND SUDDENLY SAW YOU BOTH.
W... WAS IT JIGURO WHO RAISED YOU?
...HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT?

YUGURO GATHERED ALL THE WARRIORS FROM THE CLAN AND EXPLAINED IT TO US.
THAT... YOU HATE YUGURO FOR KILLING JIGURO AND YOU CAME HERE TO GET REVENGE.
AH... I SEE.
...THIS ISN'T GOOD.
I DIDN'T THINK HE'D TELL ANYONE ABOUT ME AND JIGURO. SO HE'S PRETTY CLEVER.
BALSA! I'M TIRED OF ALL THE LIES!
PLEASE TELL ME THE TRUTH.
IF THEY ALREADY KNOW ABOUT JIGURO, HOW MUCH SHOULD I TELL THEM...?

ARE YOU HERE TO TAKE REVENGE ON YUGURO AND MAKE HIM A LAUGHING STOCK?
fwsh
YOU KNOW, WHEN I FIRST GOT HERE, YUGURO WASN'T EVEN ON MY MIND.
BUT NOW I'D LIKE TO GET HIM BACK TWICE OVER FOR WHAT HE DID.
nod
...BUT

...THEN WHY?
I DON'T WANT TO TELL YOU.
NOT FOR KILLING JIGURO.
THEN I'LL HAVE TO TELL THE CHIEF THAT YOU'RE HERE.
KASSA?!
I CAN'T SIT BACK WHILE SOMEONE HARMS OUR CLAN.
WHEN I RECEIVED MY DAGGER, I SWORE TO SERVE OUR CLAN.

DO WHAT YOU WANT.
BUT PLEASE WAIT UNTIL I'VE HEALED WELL ENOUGH THAT THE SHEPHERDS DON'T GET IN TROUBLE.
YOU AT LEAST OWE ME THAT, RIGHT?
...I UNDER-STAND.

GINA, STOP BEING SO SILLY!
IT'S NOT SILLY! SHE SAVED OUR LIVES, SO I'LL RISK MY LIFE FOR HER TOO!
IF YOU PLAN ON TELLING THEM ABOUT HER, I'LL DO EVERYTHING I CAN TO STOP YOU!
KASSA, I'LL STAND BY HER NO MATTER WHAT!
HEY, KEEP IT DOWN.
IF SHE HAS A GOOD REASON FOR WHY SHE'S DOING THIS, SHE HAS TO TELL US. THEN I'D RISK MY LIFE TO HELP HER, TOO.
YOU DUMMY, I'M NOT TELLING ON HER BECAUSE I WANT TO!

HEY, KASSA BOY.
SHE'S JUST WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
SHE DOESN'T WANT TO HARM INNOCENT PEOPLE LIKE YOU BY GETTING YOU INVOLVED.
SHE WON'T BE ABLE TO REALLY MOVE AROUND FOR ANOTHER ONE OR TWO DAYS.
SO DON'T RUSH TO DO ANYTHING. TAKE IT EASY AND GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER BEFORE YOU JUDGE HER.

AH.
OH, NO! WE'RE GOING TO BE LATE FOR DINNER! MOM'S GONNA BE SO MAD!

KAHM!
HEY.

I JUST LEFT YOUR HOUSE.
GOOD THING I BUMPED INTO YOU HERE.
YOU'RE THE ONE I CAME TO SEE.
HUH?
YOU WANTED TO SEE ME?
YES.

TOMORROW I LEAVE FOR THE CAPITAL.
I WANTED TO SPEAK WITH YOU BEFORE I LEFT.
IT'S FINE. IT WASN'T VERY SERIOUS.
...THE OTHER DAY, YOU WERE THE ONLY ONE IN THAT GATHERING WHO LOOKED WORRIED ABOUT ME.
...HOW'S YOUR INJURY?

WOULD SOMEONE AS NICE AS HIM REALLY DO SOMETHING AS AWFUL AS COATING HIS SPEAR IN POISON?
DO YOU LIKE KANBAL?
HEY, KASSA.

AFTER TRAVELING AROUND THE WORLD, I'VE REALIZED HOW POOR KANBAL REALLY IS.
...I DO.
WHY?
STILL, IT'S A BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY.

...SOON ENOUGH
HEY, KASSA.
THE STATE OF KANBAL AS A COUNTRY RELIES ON IT.
THE LUISHA GIVING CEREMONY WILL TAKE PLACE.
IF I DON'T COME BACK FROM THE MOUNTAIN DEEP,
PLEASE KNOW THAT I DIED BECAUSE I LOVE THIS BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY.

...I'M SORRY FOR WASTING YOUR TIME RAMBLING AWAY.
NO ONE KNOWS WHAT HAPPENS IN THE MOUNTAIN DEEP.
THERE'S A VERY SMALL CHANCE.
...NO WAY.
PEOPLE DON'T ACTUALLY DIE IN THE CEREMONY, DO THEY?
GOOD-BYE.
f
w
o
o
o

Yami no Moribito

"Guardian of the Darkness"

by Uehashi Nahoko

Illustrated by Yuu

Scanlation:
Lovely Strange Dark
lsd.mangadex.com

Chapter Ten

Raws: Kalendel
Translation: Den
Editing: Samara &
Nutritious Milk
QC: Ianu

YOYO! WHAT DO THOSE WHISTLES MEAN?
THEY WANT ME TO MAKE SURE YOU'RE NOT LEAVING ANY FOOT-PRINTS.
FIU
II
UI
WHSH
hup
HUH.
HUH?
fwoo
oo

fresh
YAMI NO MORIBITO
CHAPTER 10

thrust
WHOA...
I'VE TRAINED A LOT AND WATCHED A LOT OF MATCHES,
BUT I'VE NEVER SEEN SUCH BEAUTIFUL, TIGHT MOVEMENTS.
fwsh
Gulp
FREEZE

I'M NO USE TO ANYONE IF I WORK UP A SWEAT AFTER JUST A BIT OF TRAINING.
—OOF, I'VE GOTTEN SO WEAK.

grab
TO
SS

nod
I WANT TO SEE HOW JIGURO'S NEPHEW HOLDS A SPEAR.
LET ME SEE WHAT YOU CAN DO.

WHAP
fwsh

Hya!
Thrust
wh sh
step
t-wsh
glow
HMMM... WELL DONE.
YOU'LL BE A GOOD SPEARMAN ONE DAY.
...BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW GOOD I BECOME.
?

SO YOU'LL ONLY USE YOUR SPEAR IN DEFENSE?
HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT YOU MIGHT BE HAPPIER DOING THAT?
I'LL BE GUARDING GOATS THE REST OF MY LIFE
BECAUSE I'M A WARRIOR FROM A BRANCH LINE.
HAPPIER?
YES.
I'VE SURVIVED BY WIELDING A CRUEL SPEAR THAT I NEVER WANTED TO USE.
I WONDER WHAT HAPPINESS I MIGHT HAVE FOUND IF I HAD LIVED WITHOUT IT...

BUT THAT'S BESIDE THE POINT.
I'LL BE USELESS IN MY CURRENT CONDITION.
SO HOW ABOUT IT?
DO YOU WANT TO BE MY TRAINING PARTNER?

I'M TEACHING JIGURO'S NEPHEW THE THINGS I LEARNED FROM HIM.
IF I RETURNED TO KANBAL HAVING ACCOMPLISHED ONLY THAT, IT WOULD PROBABLY BE WORTH IT.
huff
huff
WOULD ANYTHING EVEN CHANGE IF I TOOK REVENGE ON YUGURO...?
...SHOULD I HEAD BACK TO YOGO UNDER THE COVER OF SNOW...?
IT'S GOING TO SNOW SOON...
ONCE IT SNOWS, THE SHEPHERDS WILL BRING THE GOATS DOWN FROM THE MOUN-TAIN.
THOSE ROCKS AREN'T LIVABLE DURING WINTER.

Huh?
FWII
IIIIIIIIIIIIIII
IIIII
NO.
IT SEEMS SOMETHING EVEN WORSE HAPPENED.
...ARE THEY HERE?
CLINK
~~~~~~
~~~~~~
FLASH

shing
shing
shock
DO YOU FEEL A SENSE OF LOYALTY TO KANBAL?
SURE.
BALSA,
CAN I ASK YOU SOME-THING?
.....
WHAT HAP-PENED?

...I DON'T THINK MUCH ABOUT MY BIRTHPLACE. I NEVER HAD THAT KIND OF LOYALTY THAT KASSA SHOWS FOR HIS CLAN.
STARE
YOU SAID YOU ONCE WORKED AS A BODYGUARD.
WHAT'S WRONG?
HUH?
CAN I ASK YOU TO BE A BODYGUARD AGAIN?

WHO NEEDS PROTECTING, AND FROM WHOM?
IT'S COMPLICATED... A TANGLED BALL OF GOAT'S YARN, AS WE SAY HERE.
IT WILL TAKE TIME FOR YOU TO UNDER-STAND.
I'M GOING TO HAVE TO BREAK A LAW,
BUT THERE'S NO SENSE IN OBEYING THE LAW IF YOU LOSE EVERYTHING ELSE.
PLEASE REST FOR ANOTHER 30 LON.
WHEN I WAKE YOU, PUT ON YOUR COAT AND BOOTS AND FOLLOW ME.
I'M GOING TO TAKE YOU TO OUR MEET-ING PLACE.
CLUNK
.....

KASSA, WAKE UP.
NAHNA IS WAITING FOR YOU OUTSIDE.
SHE IS?
I'LL GO SEE.
GO BACK TO BED.
YOU'RE GONNA GET A COLD.
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN TO BALSA?
SHE TOLD ME NOT TO COME.
C'MON, GO BACK TO BED.
...I'LL BE FINE.
NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, I'M ON BALSA'S SIDE.

PLEASE COME WITH ME TO THE MOUNTAIN CRAGS.
KASSA. TOTO CALLED FOR YOU.
STEP
rustle
Eep!
NO TORCHES. PEOPLE WILL SEE.
WAIT, WE NEED A TORCH...
I'LL TAKE YOUR HAND.
ALL THE WAY TO THE CRAGS?
DON'T WORRY, I'LL GUIDE YOU.
NOW HURRY UP.
IT'S PITCH BLACK... AND 40 LON AWAY.

THIS GOES A LONG WAY DOWN.
TAKE CARE NOT TO SLIP.

IS SOMEONE HERE?
Haa...
GO TO THE FIRE.
I THOUGHT YOU'D BE COLD, SO I LIT ONE EARLIER.

I'M GOING TO TELL YOU ONE OF KANBAL'S SECRETS.
I FEEL LIKE SOMEONE'S HERE, BUT I CAN'T SEE ANYONE...
WE WERE ONCE PART OF THE COUNTRY BELOW GROUND.
THE KINGDOM ABOVE GROUND, RULED BY THE KING OF KANBAL, AND THE KINGDOM BELOW GROUND, RULED BY THE KING OF THE MOUNTAIN.
THERE ARE TWO KINGDOMS IN THE YUSA MOTHER RANGE.
NOW, OPEN...
FLIP
PLEASE CLOSE YOUR EYES.
WE CAN ALSO SEE IN THE DARK.
WE USED TO TRAVEL BETWEEN THE KINGDOMS ABOVE AND BELOW THE GROUND. THAT'S WHY WE'RE THIS SMALL.

...I'VE SEEN THIS BEFORE.
WHEN I WAS POISONED WITH TOGAL AND SAW THE TITI LAN... THEY WERE LIT UP BRIGHTLY, JUST LIKE THIS.
glow
BLINK
YES. THIS IS A TOGAL LEAF.
BUT IF YOU JUST SOAK IT A BIT IN WATER AND TAKE A DROP, IT ISN'T POISONOUS.
IF YOU BOIL A LOT OF THESE, IT BECOMES POISON.
LONG AGO, WE COULD SEE IN THE DARK EVEN WITHOUT USING THIS. BUT LIVING IN THE SUN-LIGHT FOR SO LONG BLUNTED OUR ABILITY.
THE TITI LAN ARE CAVE DWELLERS, SO THEY CAN'T SURVIVE OUT-SIDE DURING THE DAYTIME.
Ugh!
pop
sst

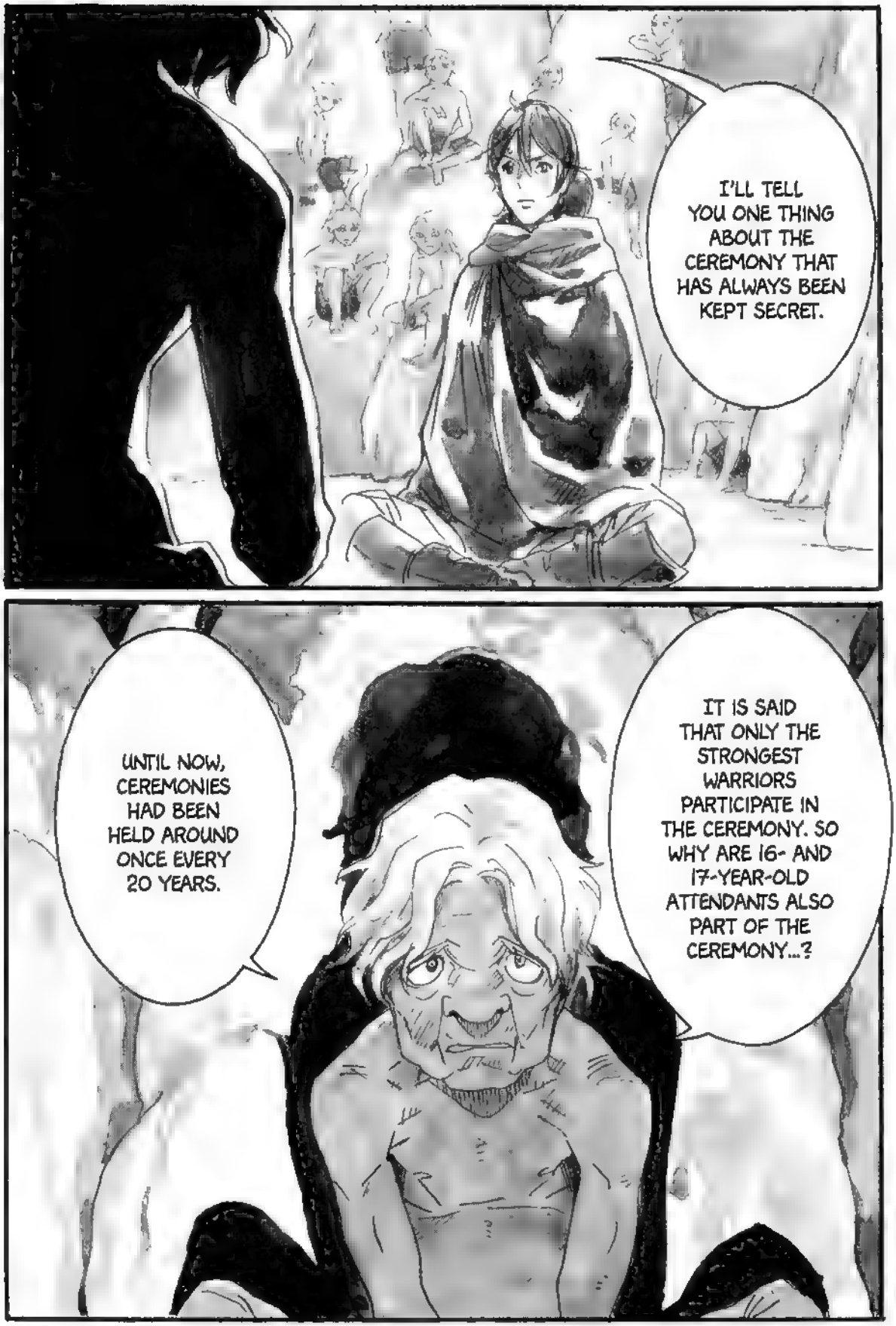
LONG, LONG AGO.
WE STARTED LIVING ABOVE GROUND
IN THE DISTANT PAST, PEOPLE IN KANBAL FOUND GEMS IN THE RIVER. THEY ASSUMED THAT THERE WERE MORE OF THEM DEEP BENEATH THE MOUNTAINS, SO THEY DECIDED TO INVADE.
BUT THE UNDERGROUND IS NOT AT ALL LIKE THE WORLD ABOVE. IT'S A WORLD OF DARKNESS.
SO MANY KANBELESE PEOPLE DIED, DYEING THE WATER UNDERGROUND RED WITH BLOOD.
A FEW DETERMINED PEOPLE WERE ABLE TO SURVIVE.
AND SO THEY STEELED THEIR HEARTS AND ASKED FOR FORGIVE-NESS.
WHEN THEY SAW THE MOUNTAIN KING, THEY REALIZED WHAT KIND OF ENEMY THEY'D MADE.
THE MOUNTAIN KING FORGAVE THEM, AND DECIDED THAT ONCE EVERY FEW YEARS, HE WOULD SEND A LUISHA TO THEIR POOR BROTHERS ABOVE GROUND.
THAT IS THE TRUE ORIGIN OF THE LUISHA GIVING CEREMONY.

OUR ANCESTORS ORIGINALLY LIVED IN THE CAVES NEAR THE WORLD ABOVE GROUND AND REVERED THE MOUNTAIN KING.
BUT TO THE KANBALESE, THEY ACTED LIKE THEY WERE JUST SHEPHERDS WHO TENDED TO THE GOATS IN THE ROCKY CRAGS.
THEY KEPT THEIR ALLEGIANCE TO THE MOUNTAIN KING A SECRET AND WERE ABLE TO OBSERVE THE PEOPLE OF KANBAL.
THE KANBALESE ARE GREEDY AND IMPATIENT PEOPLE, YOU SEE.
THEY MIGHT BREAK THEIR PROMISE TO THE MOUNTAIN KING AND STEAL THE JEWELS IN THE MOUNTAIN DEEP.
BUT AFTER LIVING WITH THEM FOR SO MANY YEARS, WE BEGAN TO APPRECIATE THEM.
NOW, WE THINK OF THE PEOPLE OF KANBAL AS OUR FRIENDS.

HUH?
JIGURO WAS A GOOD SPEAR-DANCER.
...ONE OF THEM WAS THE MAN WHO RAISED YOU, JIGURO.
THERE ARE A FEW PEOPLE IN KANBAL WHO KNOW OUR SECRET
AND RESPECT US FOR IT.
DURING THE LUISHA GIVING CEREMONY,
THE STRONGEST SPEARMEN IN KANBAL, THE KING'S SPEARS, DESCEND TO THE DEPTHS OF THE CAVES WITH THEIR ATTEND-ANTS ALONG-SIDE THEM.
SPEAR-DANCER...
THERE, THEY TEST EACH OTHER'S SKILLS, AND THE WINNER BECOMES THE DANCER WHO PERFORMS A SPEAR DANCE WITH THE HYOHLU, THE GUARDIAN OF DARKNESS.
THEN, IF THE HYOHLU RECOGNIZES THE DANCER'S SKILL, HE OPENS THE GATE AND REVEALS THE TRUE FORM OF THE MOUNTAIN KING.
THAT IS WHEN THE DANCER FINDS OUT WHO WE REALLY ARE.

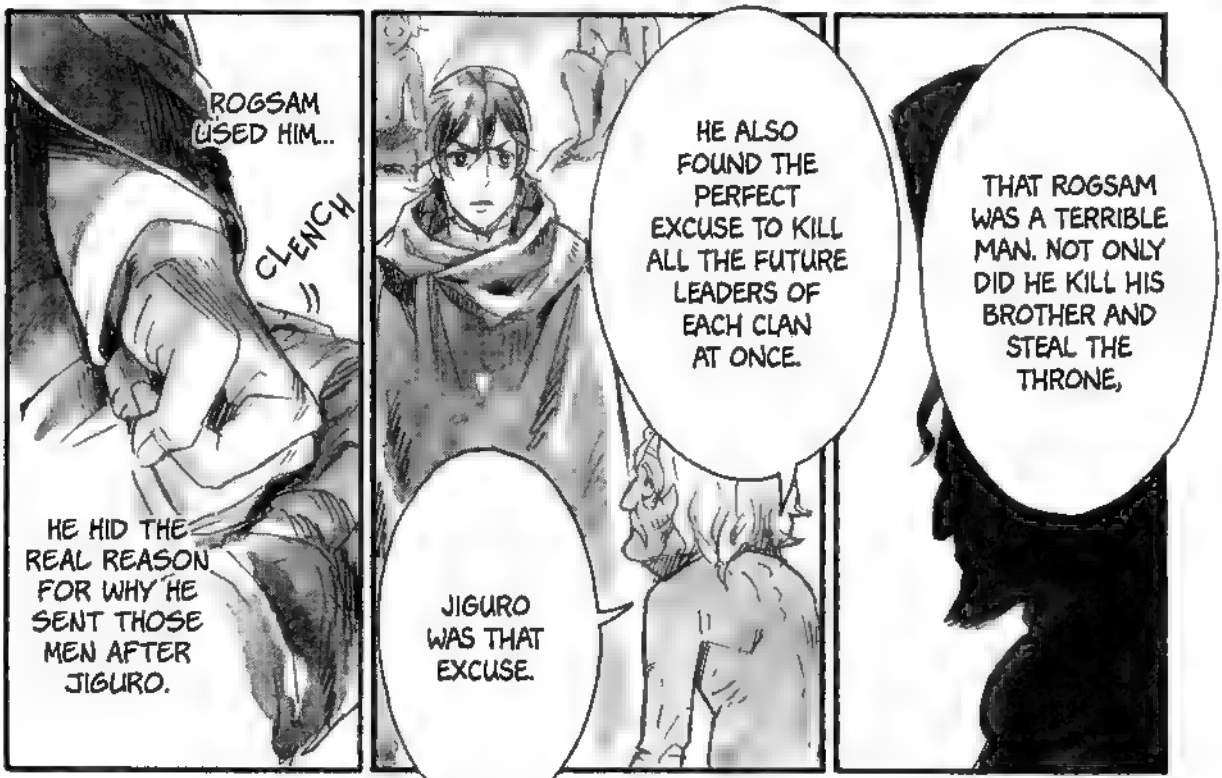
...I KNEW JIGURO EVER SINCE HE WAS BORN. HE WAS A NATURAL WITH THE SPEAR.
HE DIDN'T EXPRESS A LOT OF EMOTION, BUT HE WAS AN HONEST, DETERMINED BOY.
THAT WAS WHY I WASN'T SURPRISED WHEN HE BEAT ALL THE KING'S SPEARS WHEN HE WAS 16 AND JUST AN ATTENDANT.
BUT...
THAT WAS...
I KNOW. IT WAS A DECISION HE MADE TO SAVE YOUR LIFE.
HIS TALENT BROUGHT MISFORTUNE UPON KANBAL.
BUT IT DOESN'T CHANGE THE FACT THAT HE INVITED GREAT MISFORTUNE.

YUGURO SAID THAT WHEN HE DEFEATED JIGURO, HE WAS CHOSEN AS THE NEXT KING'S SPEAR.
HE LIED ABOUT DEFEATING JIGURO, BUT HE DIDN'T LIE ABOUT BEING CHOSEN AS A KING'S SPEAR, DIDN'T HE?
WELL, THE ONLY THING I KNOW IS THAT THEY TRAINED TOGETHER EVERY NIGHT, AND WHEN THEY PARTED WAYS JIGURO GAVE HIM THE GOLD RING FROM HIS SPEAR.
THE GOLD RING MARKS HIM AS A KING'S SPEAR. IF JIGURO GAVE IT TO YUGURO, THEN THAT MEANS HE WANTED HIM TO BE THE NEXT DANCER.
JIGURO BROUGHT SO MUCH UNHAPPI-NESS TO KANBAL, BUT THAT WAS THE SEED OF ALL THE MISFORTUNE.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

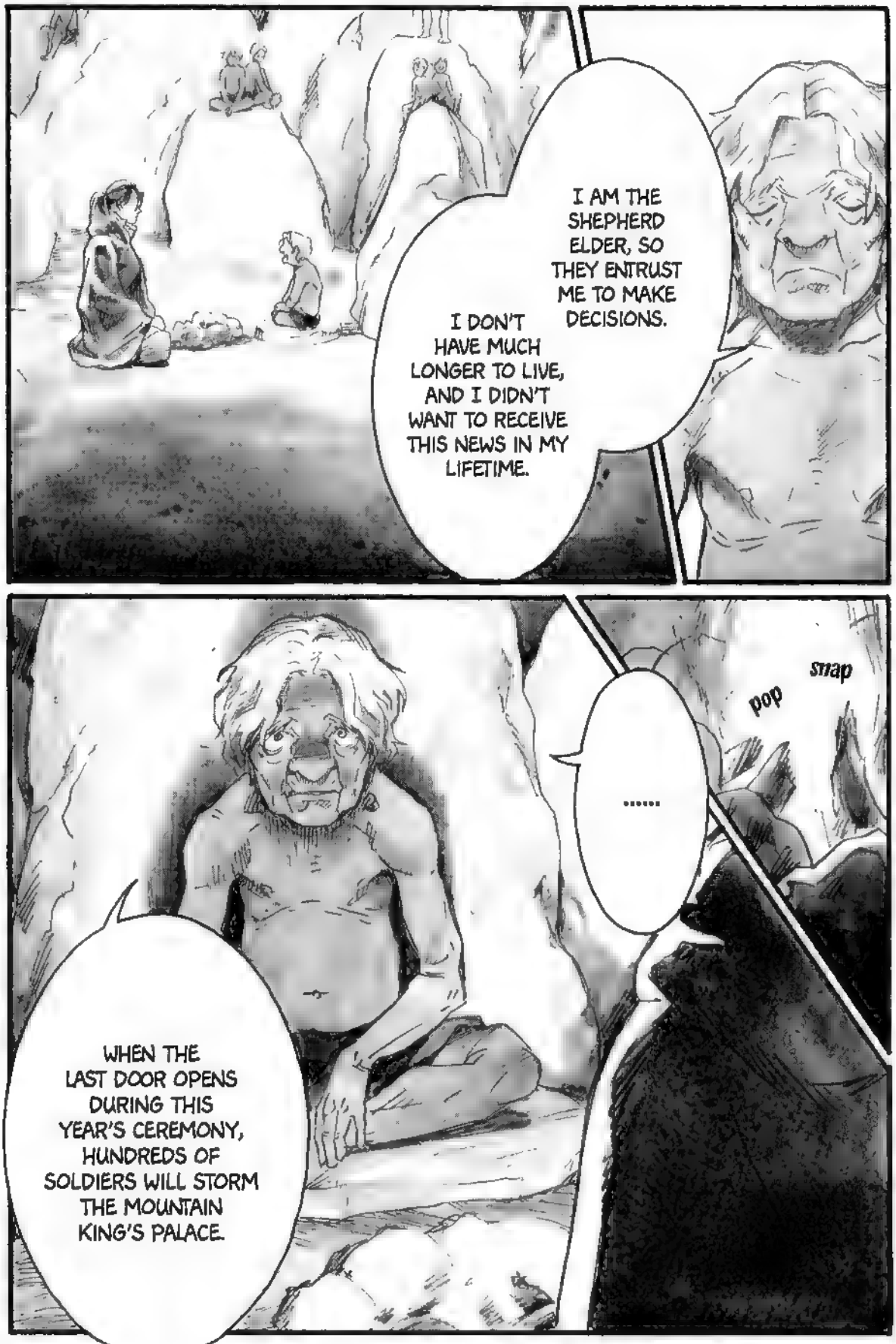

I'LL TELL YOU ONE THING ABOUT THE CEREMONY THAT HAS ALWAYS BEEN KEPT SECRET.
UNTIL NOW, CEREMONIES HAD BEEN HELD AROUND ONCE EVERY 20 YEARS.
IT IS SAID THAT ONLY THE STRONGEST WARRIORS PARTICIPATE IN THE CEREMONY. SO WHY ARE 16- AND 17-YEAR-OLD ATTENDANTS ALSO PART OF THE CEREMONY...?

THE MEN WHO ENTER THE MOUNTAIN DEEP ARE BOUND BY A CODE OF SILENCE TO NEVER TALK ABOUT WHAT THEY SEE.
THAT MEANS THAT IF A WARRIOR DOESN'T ATTEND THE CEREMONY AS A KING'S SPEAR OR ATTENDANT BEFORE THEY'RE 25, THEN BY THE NEXT CEREMONY THEY'LL ALREADY BE TOO OLD TO ATTEND.
THAT'S HOW THE IDEA OF ATTENDANTS STARTED.
SO TO ENSURE THAT SOMEONE WOULD SUCCEED, THEY DECIDED THAT THOSE WHO HAD PARTICIPATED IN ONE CEREMONY SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO THE NEXT ONE.
THE FIRST OF THE KING'S SPEARS KNEW JUST HOW HARD AND TERRIFYING THE GIVING CEREMONY WAS.
WHAT I MEANT BEFORE?
SO DO YOU UNDERSTAND
SURELY NOT...

ALL THE MEN THAT JIGURO KILLED PARTICIPATED IN THE LAST CEREMONY 35 YEARS AGO IN THE MOUNTAIN DEEP, EITHER AS AN ATTENDANT OR A KING'S SPEAR.
SO WHEN JIGURO FLED, ALL THE YOUNG MEN FROM THEN WHO WOULD BECOME WARRIORS... BASICALLY, ALL THE MEN WHO COULD BE DANCERS IN THE NEXT GIVING CEREMONY...
HE WOUND UP KILLING THEM ALL.


THAT ROGSAM WAS A TERRIBLE MAN. NOT ONLY DID HE KILL HIS BROTHER AND STEAL THE THRONE,
HE ALSO FOUND THE PERFECT EXCUSE TO KILL ALL THE FUTURE LEADERS OF EACH CLAN AT ONCE.
JIGURO WAS THAT EXCUSE.
ROGSAM USED HIM...
CLENCH
HE HID THE REAL REASON FOR WHY HE SENT THOSE MEN AFTER JIGURO.

ROGSAM WANTED TO WEAKEN EACH CLAN AND STRENGTHEN HIS AUTHORITY AS KING,
BUT THERE WAS SOMETHING IMPORTANT HE DIDN'T KNOW.
IN THE LAST GIVING CEREMONY, IT WAS HIS ELDER BROTHER KING NAGUL WHO HAD PARTICIPATED AS AN ATTENDANT. ROGSAM HIMSELF HAD NEVER ATTENDED A CEREMONY.
HE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND THE GRAVITY OF ELIMINATING ALL THE FUTURE SPEARDANCER CANDIDATES.
sst
NOW KANBAL IS ON THE VERGE OF RUIN.
KING RADALLE AND YUGURO HAVE HATCHED AN INCREDIBLY FOOLISH PLAN.
OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, OUR ALLIES HAD CAUGHT WIND THAT SOMETHING WAS GOING ON.
THEN TONIGHT I RECEIVED WORD FROM OUR ALLIES IN THE CAPITAL THAT OUR WORST FEARS HAVE COME TRUE.


I AM THE SHEPHERD ELDER, SO THEY ENTRUST ME TO MAKE DECISIONS.
I DON'T HAVE MUCH LONGER TO LIVE, AND I DIDN'T WANT TO RECEIVE THIS NEWS IN MY LIFETIME.
snap
pop
.....
WHEN THE LAST DOOR OPENS DURING THIS YEAR'S CEREMONY, HUNDREDS OF SOLDIERS WILL STORM THE MOUNTAIN KING'S PALACE.

NO MATTER HOW FOOLISH THE KING IS, IF THE KING'S SPEARS HAD THAT EXPERIENCE, THIS FOOLISH PLAN WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN HATCHED IN THE FIRST PLACE.
AHHH... IF ONLY JIGURO DIDN'T KILL THOSE YOUNG PEOPLE.

TO INVADE THE KINGDOM BENEATH THE MOUNTAIN AND STEAL THE LUISHA.
NOT ONE OF THEM KNOWS HOW FOOLISH IT IS

EVEN IF THOUSANDS OF SOLDIERS HID IN THE MOUNTAIN DEEP, IT WOULD STILL BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR THEM TO PREVAIL.
NO MATTER HOW SKILLED THE SPEARMAN IS, IF THE HYOHLU DECIDES TO KILL HIM, HE WILL NOT FAIL.
THE DARKNESS IN THE CEREMONIAL AREA READS THE MINDS OF PEOPLE WHO ARE WITHIN IT. IF THE HYOHLU DETECTS THAT THE SPEARDANCER IS HIDING AN ANIMOSITY FOR THE MOUNTAIN KING, THEN HE WILL KILL HIM.

SHUDDER
.....
HOW SHARPLY THAT TORCH WAS CAUGHT...
fwsh
THAT'S RIGHT.
haa
...SO THEN,
WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE ME DO?
THE DANCER WILL BE KILLED BY THE HYOHLU AND THE FINAL DOOR WILL NOT OPEN. THE LUISHA WILL NOT BE GIVEN.
IF HOSTILITY TOWARDS THE MOUNTAIN KING FILLS UP THE DARKNESS OF THE CEREMONIAL AREA, KANBAL WILL PERISH...
IF THERE IS NO LUISHA, KANBAL WILL NOT BE ABLE TO BUY GRAIN. AND WITHOUT GRAIN, THOUSANDS WILL DIE.

I WANT YOU TO PROTECT KASSA.
...WHAT?
AND YOU'RE MAKING KASSA DO THAT?
BE SERIOUS.
HOW THE HELL WOULD HE CONVINCE THE KING AND THE OTHERS?
THE ONLY WAY TO SAVE KANBAL IS TO GO TO THE CEREMONY AREA AND CONVINCE THE KING AND THE KING'S SPEARS TO STOP BEFORE THE HYOHLU EVEN ARRIVES.
HEAR ME OUT.
I KNOW FULL WELL HOW IMPROBABLE THIS IS,
BUT I CAN'T THINK OF ANY OTHER WAY.

ONLY TWO ARE STILL ALIVE. LALOOG FROM THE YONSA CLAN AND LONSA FROM THE MUTO CLAN.
EVEN MOST OF THE OLDER MEN WHO ONCE ATTENDED THE CEREMONY, THE ONES JIGURO DIDN'T KILL, HAVE SINCE DIED...
tap
tap
WE KNOW A ROAD IN THE MOUNTAIN DEEP WHERE YOU CAN REACH THE CEREMONY AREA IN JUST FOUR DAYS.
BUT,
WHILE LITTLE PEOPLE LIKE US CAN TRAVERSE THE ROAD, THE PATH WOULD BE TOO NARROW FOR A KANBALESE MAN.
OF COURSE IT WOULD BE BETTER IF THEY WENT TO TRY AND CONVINCE THE KING, BUT THEY'RE TOO OLD. THEY COULDN'T MAKE THE TEN DAY RIDE TO REACH THE KING AND PERSUADE HIM.

BOTH OF YOU COULD TAKE THAT ROAD AND REACH THE CEREMONY AREA IN TIME.
YES. JUST AS YOU'VE NOTICED, KASSA IS SMALL.
YOU'RE SMALL TOO, COMPARED TO MOST MEN.
THAT'S WHY HE WANTS KASSA...
CLENCH
YOU MUST BE JOK-ING!
LALOOG OF THE YONSA CLAN IS RESPECTED BY EVERYONE BECAUSE HE HAS BEEN TO A GIVING CEREMONY.
IF KASSA TAKES A LETTER FROM LALOOG AND DELIVERS IT TO THE CEREMONY AREA...

THAT BOY IS ONLY 15! HOW COULD YOU MAKE HIM DO SOME-THING SO DANGER-OUS...?!
DO YOU THINK YUGURO AND THE KING WOULD ABANDON ALL THEIR PLANS BECAUSE OF A LETTER?!
THEY'LL ARREST HIM AND IT'S OVER!
IF KASSA CAN'T PERSUADE THEM, PLEASE TAKE HIM AND RUN.
THANK-FULLY, THE CEREMONIAL AREA IS EXTREMELY DARK.
THAT'S WHY I'M ASKING YOU TO BE HIS BODYGUARD.
WILL YOU TRY?
NO MATTER HOW UNLIKE-LY THE PLAN IS, IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO SAVE KANBAL.
CLENCH
.....

BALSA...
WHEN YOU RETURNED TO THIS COUNTRY, A HYOHLU APPEARED AND DANCED WITH YOU.
THAT HAS NEVER HAPPENED BEFORE.
AND YOU WERE RESCUED BY A TITI LAN AND BROUGHT TO US.
ISN'T THIS FATE?
Smile
JIGURO WAS CHOSEN AS A DANCER, BUT HE BETRAYED THE MOUNTAIN KING AND BROUGHT MISFORTUNE TO THIS KINGDOM.
HE KILLED MANY SPEARMEN. HE GAVE HIS GOLD RING TO YUGURO OUT OF LOVE FOR HIS BROTHER AND TO PROTECT THE CHIEF'S BLOODLINE.
HOW CAN HIS SOUL FIND PEACE AFTER THAT?

AND ATONE FOR MY OWN SINS.
Grit
I'LL SINK BENEATH THE MOUNTAINS OF YUSA, THE MOTHER RANGE,
THAT THE WOMAN RAISED BY JIGURO SHOULD RISK HER LIFE FOR THIS... IT'S FATE.
...STOP PLAYING GAMES.
WHO DO YOU THINK MADE HIM DO THAT?
YOU SAY JIGURO BROUGHT MISFOR-TUNE TO THIS COUNTRY?
ALL THIS COUNTRY HAS EVER GIVEN ME WAS A LIFE OF HELL.

DON'T YOU EVER DISMISS THOSE DAYS, THAT SUFFERING,
grit
AS MERE FATE!
EVEN NOW I DON'T THINK JIGURO DID ANYTHING WRONG.
HE DID WHAT HE COULD IN THAT SITUATION.
IF I LIVED HIS LIFE I WOULD HAVE DONE THE SAME THING.
IT WOULD BE FOR JIGURO, WHO WENT THROUGH HELL FOR THIS COUNTRY.
...IF I WERE TO RISK MY LIFE FOR THIS, I WOULDN'T BE DOING IT FOR KANBAL.
THEN LET IT BE FOR JIGURO.
YOU'LL DO IT, RIGHT?

NO!!
JIGURO LIVED A HARD, ISOLATED LIFE BECAUSE OF WHAT YOU CALL FATE!
KASSA WILL NOT GO THROUGH WHAT JIGURO DID!

...I
STAND
WILL GO.

KASSA...

BALSA, YOU'VE FORGOTTEN SOMETHING IMPORTANT.
THIS IS NOT YOUR PROBLEM. IT'S KASSA'S.
SO YOU WANTED HIM TO HEAR EVERY-THING!
KAHM... HE SPOKE TO ME LIKE IT WAS HIS FINAL WORDS, LIKE HE HAD A PREMONITION THAT SOME-THING WOULD HAPPEN THAT COULDN'T BE UNDONE...
.....
IF THEY DO NOT GET A LUISHA, IT'S NOT YOU WHO WILL STARVE, BUT KASSA AND HIS PEOPLE.

CLENCH
I DON'T WANT KAHM OR ANYONE ELSE TO DIE.
BALSA,
I'M GOING. EVEN IF I HAVE TO GO ALONE.

THIS BOY...
HE WOULD RISK HIS LIFE WILLINGLY...
THIS BOY ISN'T LIKE CHAGUM.
I PROBA-BLY WON'T BE ABLE TO PROTECT YOU.
DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT HAPPENS THEN?
I'LL BE FACING THE BEST SPEARMEN OF KANBAL ALONE. THE ODDS ARE NOT IN OUR FAVOR.
haa
nod

AND YOU STILL WANT TO GO?
YES.
nod
...I DON'T WANT TO SEE EVERY-ONE DIE.
TO BE CONTINUED IN THE FINAL VOLUME.

あとがき
Afterword

1話目から一緒に作業しているアシスタントさんと「この国はどんな植物が生えているんだろう」「ここの岩山はどんな色をしているのだろう」「お店には何があるのかな」などといつも想像を膨らませ、たくさん『守り人』の世界に思いを馳せているので、今春から始まるNHKの実写版『精霊の守り人』はとても楽しみです。

漫画版『闇の守り人』が始まってから、もう3分の2まで来ることができたんだなあと、付箋だらけの小説を撫でながら思います。いよいよクライマックスに向けて、気持ちもより引き締まってきました。ぜひ最後までどうぞよろしくお願いいたします。お手に取っていただきありがとうございました。

Special Thanks
お手伝いしてくださった夏江まみさま、川口さま

2016・3　結布